

DN disabilitynow

the campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

£1.80 January 2004 • established 1984

20th anniversary

This year, DN celebrates its 20th birthday. See page 22 for details on how the UK's leading disability publication plans to mark its first two decades.

On the cover: Lord (Jack) Ashley, founder of the All Party Parliamentary Disability Group, who is deaf, received a lifetime award last month for his campaigning work from the politics communications channel ePolitix. See page 6. Picture by PA Photos

DN CAMPAIGN

We need cannabis to be legalised now

BY LUCY GLYNN

The results of DN's new cannabis survey show the government must legalise the drug, even if a new cannabis-based spray is finally approved.

The survey found that almost all those taking the drug illegally to ease their conditions said it helped them. Many said their GPs and consultants approve of them taking it.

The survey also revealed the costs of buying cannabis illegally, with nearly half who use it spending more than £50 a month.

Paul Smith, executive director of the Spinal Injuries Association, said: "It's frighten-

ing anyone on benefits would have to spend such a large sum."

A leading disabled person, who used to take cannabis regularly to ease her impairment, said the drug was "one of the safest forms of pain relief available". Her GP knew she was taking cannabis, she added.

Paul Flynn MP said pressure to legalise the drug was building and the amount of money many disabled people spent on it was "absolutely crazy".

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has so far taken eight months to decide whether to approve GW Pharmaceuticals' cannabis-

based spray for people with multiple sclerosis.

Even if a spray was available on prescription, though, 60 of the 129 people who answered this question said they would still buy cannabis illegally.

Of 191 people who took part in the survey, 170 use cannabis for medicinal purposes and find it relieves their condition.

And 78 people said their GP knew they took it and approved. Another 42 said their specialists approved.

Leading cannabis expert Dr Willy Notcutt said he wasn't surprised many doctors approved of patients taking cannabis. He said: "The quicker

cannabis becomes available on prescription the better. I've got a large number of patients who are taking cannabis, others who want to stop taking morphine. There's a huge un-met need."

Clare Hodges, of the Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics, said the MHRA delay was "farfical". "It's very frustrating. Why don't they just talk to people who use it?"

A British Medical Association spokesman said he thought doctors recommending cannabis was a "rarity" but people taking cannabis should tell their doctors to avoid problems with their other medications.

• Cannabis survey, page 14

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Anger at Blair bungle

DN EXCLUSIVE BY JOHN PRING

Disabled campaigners have attacked the Prime Minister for using insulting and inappropriate language at a reception he hosted to mark the end of the European Year of Disabled People (EYDP).

The event on 1 December at the Government's Lancaster House mansion in London was attended by influential figures in the disability world, including representatives of the 170 projects which shared £2.3 million from the Government and European Commission in EYDP funding. But guests were appalled when Tony Blair referred three times in a speech to "the disabled".

Rachel Hurst, director of Disability Awareness in Action, heckled the PM on each occasion. She said the language was "very offensive" and "insulting". "I couldn't possibly let anybody get away with that and certainly



Tony Blair at the reception with Maria Eagle and Anne Pridmore, vice chair of the UK national coordinating committee for EYDP

not our Prime Minister. He really ought to know better. I do expect him to see us as people."

Andy Rickell, chief executive of the British Council of Disabled People, said Disabled People's Minister Maria Eagle was visibly "squirming" at the PM's repeated blunder.

He said: "The language was inappropriate. It was the implication that we are a homoge-

neous group of people whose main or only characteristic is that we have impairments.

"It makes us something a bit less than human beings with human rights. He needs to attend a disability equality training course."

A spokesman for the Prime Minister refused to comment on the language used in the speech.

• Mind your language, page 33

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1/7/02 - 30/6/03



DN CAMPAIGN

Eagle backs journo call

DN's ground-breaking journalism campaign has won the backing of Disabled People's Minister Maria Eagle.

Commending our Hacked Off campaign, she said employing more disabled reporters was "the best way" of changing the way disability is represented.

"If disabled people are present in newsrooms, it will get people reporting reality instead of the negative representations you often see which come about through ignorance," she said.

And she gave a strong mes-

sage to newspapers and broadcasters who are "missing out" on talent by not employing disabled people. "There are 8.6m disabled people in this country. Do you think none of them have got any talent? Because that is ridiculous."

As DN launched a survey of national newspapers to see how many disabled journalists they employ, Ms Eagle warned them of their legal obligation not to discriminate in employment.

"They have to ask themselves if there aren't any dis-

abled people then are they discriminating, before it is done through the courts."

Ms Eagle urged them to be more open to those who have "traditionally been excluded", and to better reflect the society they report on, by signing the Hacked Off pledge.

Following our research on journalism colleges, she said: "The lack of presence of disabled people on courses shows there are barriers. They need to take positive steps to overcome them."

DN CAMPAIGN

Support for Justice campaign

A Disability Rights Commissioner has given DN's Justice for Survivors campaign her "wholehearted support" in its attempt to correct a "travesty of justice".

Dr Philippa Russell was a member of the independent inquiry that reported in 1998 on the Longcare abuse scandal, the case that led DN to launch its campaign.

We are calling on the government to close the gap between the maximum sentence for ill-treating or neglecting a child – ten years – and that for ill-treat-

ing or neglecting an adult with a learning difficulty – just two years.

Dr Russell told DN the inquiry team were "appalled at the inappropriately low sentences" available to the courts for serious offences against people with learning difficulties, and considered them to be "an insult".

They believed such sentences were not a sufficient deterrent and "trivialised" the suffering of the victims.

She said: "We do need to give a very real message... that

the abuse of people with learning difficulties will not be tolerated."

And she said the government's Mental Health, Sexual Offences, Mental Incapacity and Criminal Justice Bills provided a "unique opportunity" to review sentencing.

Meg Munn MP, the new chair of the Voice all-party group on the abuse of people with learning difficulties, is also backing the campaign, joining Central England People First, Voice UK, Mencap and Values Into Action.

GARY BAKER PHOTOGRAPHY



Year to remember: West Lothian Council's 2004 calendar features pictures of disabled people taking part in inclusive events held during the European Year of Disabled People. The council has 50 free copies for DN readers. Email lynette.valentine@westlothian.gov.uk

Travel services cut

The two leading companies that specialise in holidays for severely disabled people have cut their services because of continuing concerns over lifting and handling regulations.

Chalfont Line told DN that severely disabled people will now have to take a friend with them if they want to travel abroad.

Previously, it provided staff to lift customers.

The company blamed "exorbitant" insurance premiums, and the shortage of hoists in many foreign destinations.

The Winged Fellowship

Trust said that it would not be running any overseas holidays this year.

It blamed the cost of training volunteers in how to lift and handle disabled people correctly in foreign locations with no hoists.

It has also had problems recruiting volunteers and with fund-raising.

Lynn Wilson, director of operations for the trust, said: "Extra training increases the cost of the holiday. Our overseas holidays cost a lot of money anyway."

• Holidays, pages 25-32

Jail threat for care protestor

A disabled man could face prison for protesting to his local council about his care package and alleged discrimination against other disabled people.

Colin Revell, from Anlaby, who has Aspergers syndrome and other learning difficulties, was due to attend a court hearing as DN went to press.

He allegedly breached an injunction which banned him from East Riding of Yorkshire Council offices.

His final protest took place on 3 December, the International Day of Disabled People.

The hearing was due to take place at Kingston Upon Hull County Court on Monday, 15 December.

Mr Revell's complaints about his care plan are now with the Local Government Ombudsman.



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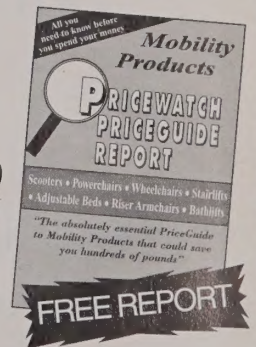
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Warning over kids in care

A leading education and disability lawyer has warned that the government's child protection proposals will fail disabled children in care.

David Ruebain told *DN* that the child protection bill, announced in the Queen's Speech and based on last year's green paper, will make it harder for disabled children in care to get the education they need.

"Effectively the only parent you have is your local authority and that's the same body who'll be making decisions about your education. There's no-one to take a scrutinising role, as parents ordinarily do.

"With education and social services coming under one umbrella there will be even closer links between the two."

The Disability Rights

Commission has called for independent advocacy for all disabled children during assessments as part of its response to the green paper. It said the government should set targets to bridge attainment gaps between disabled and non-disabled children.

A working group on child protection and disability urged the government to take the opportunity of the green paper to develop a national strategy to safeguard disabled children from abuse (*DN October*).

Its report* found barriers to protecting disabled children at "all stages of the child protection process".

The Department of Education was unable to comment.

* *It Doesn't Happen to Disabled Children*, www.nspcc.org.uk

• David Ruebain profile, page 16

Scooter stake sold

The company that owns the disability website youreable.com has sold its stake in the Motability scooters and powered wheelchairs scheme.

Bright Futures Group plc (BFG) said that the sale of its 49 per cent shareholding to a subsidiary of the Enabling

Partnership (EP) for £150,000 would help expand its retail empire.

BFG and EP only took over the scheme last May, and renamed it route2mobility (r2m). r2m is now fully owned by Enabling Partnership Trading.

LUCY GLYNN



Watching brief: (from left to right) Amani Al-Haj, Hamarat Emre and Samah Al-Haj at the launch of a new video* on how to be and use a personal assistant. The video was shot during a training weekend for young people run by Empower, an organisation set up by *DN* columnist Kate Caryer in 2000.

*Copies from hq@empower2001.org.uk

Abortion challenge backed

The disabled people's movement is backing a court action to challenge the legality of aborting disabled foetuses after 24 weeks.

Chester curate Joanna Jepson (right), who was herself born with a facial disfigurement, won the right to a judicial review of the decision by police not to prosecute a doctor who aborted a foetus that was more than 24 weeks old because it had a cleft palate.

Current laws allow abortion up to birth if there is risk of a



severe disability.

Campaigners hope the case will raise public awareness of the "discriminatory" nature of abortion laws and force a gov-

ernment re-examination.

Rachel Hurst, of Disability Awareness in Action, said the case was about abolishing late abortion on the grounds of any impairment. "It's discriminatory and a contravention of human rights," she said.

And Andy Rickell, chief executive of the British Council of Disabled People, said: "We want to see this discriminatory clause got rid of.

"The same rule should apply to both disabled and non-disabled foetuses."



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DN CAMPAIGN



Wheelchair refusal

A family claims it was left £450 out of pocket after an airline went back on its promise to carry a five-year-old boy's wheelchair.

Carol Bucknall, from Tyne and Wear, was "disgusted" when KLM Royal Dutch Airlines said there wouldn't be room for her son Harry's wheelchair, after it assured her twice there would be space. The family were travelling to Budapest to take Harry to the Peto Institute.

They were told: "We are not refusing to take the disabled

passenger, only his wheelchair."

Three weeks before their departure, they had to book more expensive and inconvenient flights. KLM is investigating the claim, but said its policy was to treat all passengers equally.

Meanwhile, Bob Ross, who has cp and arthritis, took Ryanair and Stansted Airport to court last month, with Disability Rights Commission backing, after being charged for using a wheelchair at the airport. A decision was expected as *DN* went to press.

Arthritis Care sheds staff

Arthritis Care is to make up to 15 managers redundant – about seven per cent of its staff – as part of a series of cost-cutting measures.

It follows other disability charities such as the ME Association, RADAR, the RNID and Scope which have all faced financial problems in the last year.

William Butler, chief executive of Arthritis Care, said trustees had agreed to reduce management costs to protect frontline services for people with arthritis.

The charity, which has about 60,000 members, will also be "reshaped". It blamed a short-fall in fundraising revenue. www.arthritiscare.org.uk

Bill welcomed

Incapacity Bill due in 2004

Thumbs up for draft disability legislation, but concern raised over transport measures

The Minister for Disabled People has told DN that measures in the government's new draft Disability Bill* would deliver a "massive improvement" to disabled people's rights.

Maria Eagle MP said: "By the time this bill has been passed, certainly we will have seen a massive improvement in the rights and opportunities that disabled people have to access all aspects of life, whether work or leisure."

And she said the government would try "very hard" to ensure the bill became law before the next General Election.

She also defended the government against claims that the transport lobby had weakened measures on public transport, saying there had to be a "balance" between the interests of operators and disabled people.

The draft Bill was broadly welcomed by disability organisations. Bert Massie, chairman of the Disability Rights Commission, said a duty on public sector organisations to promote disability equality would have "seismic implications".

Scope was also "delighted" at this new duty, although it had concerns that the transport measures were not

Bill at a glance

- Force public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people
- Extend DDA to cover most public sector activities
- Bring more people with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer within DDA
- End the exemption of transport vehicles from DDA duties on service providers
- Extend DDA to rented property
- Extend DDA to private clubs with at least 25 members
- Set a date by which all rail vehicles will have to be accessible***
- Bring local councillors within the scope of DDA***

strong enough.

Andy Rickell, chief executive of the British Council of Disabled People, welcomed some measures but said the Bill fell "far short" of an alternative put forward by the campaigning coalition Our Rights Now.

He claimed the transport lobby had succeeded in delaying measures to address discrimination, and added: "A lot of disabled people will be dead before they get their rights."



RADAR welcomed the bill and called on disabled people and organisations to work with the government to ensure the final Bill was "robust".

The Bill will now be scrutinised by a parliamentary committee**, which is due to report by the spring.

• The government also announced that "significant improvements" would be made to its controversial draft Mental Health Bill, with a new version

to be published "as soon as possible".

The draft Bill met fierce opposition, particularly with its proposals to force people in the community to take medication against their will.

*www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm60/6058/6058.htm

**details of how to submit evidence will be published at www.disability.gov.uk

***These measures have not yet been published

The controversial Mental Incapacity Bill will be introduced this year despite its omission from the Queen's Speech, according to the government.

The bill aims to give disabled people more rights to make decisions for themselves, such as advance statements on treatment if they lose capacity. It would also create a "general authority" to make day-to-day and emergency decisions in the best interests of someone lacking capacity.

But a Lords and Commons Joint Committee report on the bill warned last month that the term "best interests" was open to misinterpretation, and the concept of a general authority needed better safeguards.

Jean Collins, director of Values Into Action, said the committee still underestimated the importance to people with learning difficulties of making day-to-day decisions. "There's no kind of monitoring process, no system of challenging someone acting under the general authority."

Campaigners welcomed the report's support for advocacy, which the bill omitted.

But Andrew Lee, director of People First, said: "We want a mandatory right to advocacy for people with learning difficulties. Parliament has too much faith in our carers."

Warner bothers

The beleaguered financial director of Remploy has been appointed the organisation's new chief executive.

Work and Pensions Minister Andrew Smith said the appointment of Bob Warner, who is being investigated in Italy over the collapse of a mobile phone company, was a "vote of confidence" in Remploy's progress.

But Phil Davies, of the GMB union, said workers were "very disappointed" after raising their concerns about Mr

Warner at a meeting with Disabled People's Minister Maria Eagle, and passing a vote of no confidence in him two months ago. The union was set to meet her for a second time as DN went to press.

Remploy chairman Alan Pedder said Mr Warner had done "an effective job... in improving Remploy's finances and growing the business". A spokeswoman said the firm was "confident" the investigations would be resolved.

Student fight

Deaf students in Manchester are fighting to save two of their classmates from deportation after their asylum claims were rejected.

Around 25 campaigners picketed the immigration court in Manchester at the appeal of Sameeha Akhtar, 19, and her family.

Sameeha and her younger sister, who are both deaf, left Pakistan in 1999 after being held hostage by gunmen.

Four thousand people are reported to have signed petitions presented to the Home Office in Braille to support them.

Fellow City College student Kristine Mitrovska, 18, who is Roma, fled Latvia in 2002 because of racist attacks.

Both Sameeha and Kristine now use British Sign Language.

Tony Openshaw, of the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns*, said they would be unable to continue their education or find jobs in their home countries.

*www.ncadc.org.uk

Work funding too little

The government spends only a fifth of the European Union average on schemes to help disabled people into work, according to a new TUC report.*

It calls for an extra £1 billion a year to boost the proportion of disabled adults in work in Britain from the European average of 49 per cent to a target of 60 per cent. Among recommendations, it says the government

should expand and advertise its Access to Work scheme.

But a government spokesman said numbers on the scheme had more than trebled since 1996/97 and that the best way to promote Access to Work was through Jobcentre Plus offices.

*Setting new goals: disabled people, work and poverty, email erichards@tuc.org.uk

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Luke has a global developmental delay with a severe learning disability. He is making slow and steady progress, but will continue to need support and encouragement in all aspects of his daily care. Luke can walk independently with his rollator, but at other times uses a wheelchair. Luke's communication skills are improving day by day and he uses a picture board at home and at school.

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News Review

A monthly round-up of news from the mainstream media

Right to die reconsidered
Parliament is to reconsider the legal status of assisted dying, following the case of Diane Pretty, who lost her battle for the right to die in 2002.

The House of Lords Liaison Committee recommended that a new ad hoc select committee be set up to consider changes in public opinion and the experience of countries where assisted dying is legal.

Capital lags behind

A report by the King's Fund found the government is failing to modernise mental health services in London.

London's State of Mind found there were twice as many compulsory admissions under the Mental Health Act in London as in any other NHS region in England.

The capital had a consistently high number of mental health hospital beds, with occupancy rates rising to 97 per cent, and serious staff shortages.

Hospitals still open

Learning disability charity Turning Point warned that the government will miss its deadline of moving people out of long-stay hospitals.

It said 16 long-stay hospitals would still be open after April, and half of approximately 750 people with learning difficulties still waiting to move into their own homes will not be able to.

The charity said some long-stay hospitals were not set to close until 2006 and called for a new, revised target to close them down by December 2004.

Right to eat crisps

A nine-year-old diabetic girl who was told she could not eat crisps at break time in front of other pupils won an apology from her school.

Poverest Primary in Kent refused to let Hannah Godly eat the snack to keep her blood sugar level stable because it had a fruit-only policy.

The Disability Rights Commission, which took Hannah's case to tribunal, said schools should be flexible to avoid discriminating against disabled pupils.

Ashley tops winning bill

In a pre-Christmas flurry of awards, many people in the disability world have been honoured.

Lord Ashley, founder and chair of the All Party Parliamentary Disability Group and dogged campaigner on behalf of disabled people, received a lifetime award in the Charity Champion Awards.

These new awards, set up by the politics communications channel ePolitix, recognise the work of MPs in promoting charitable causes in Parliament.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, winner of the children's section, said of Lord Ashley: "From his achievements, we can all draw strength. He does show the true value of public service. Jack Ashley is one of those great men and women whose qualities of character are the real threads in the pattern of our society."

Tom Clarke MP, who piloted the pioneering Disabled Persons (Services, Representation and Consultation) Act through Parliament in 1986 and has fought many corners since,



Honoured: (clockwise from left), Lord Ashley with Gordon Brown; Tom Shakespeare with minister Maria Eagle and Martin Mosely from Barclays Bank, and Lin Berwick with Sue MacGregor



including carers and advocacy, was named Disability Champion.

Lord Ashley was also at RADAR's People of the Year awards on the International Day of Disabled People, presenting a lifetime achievement award to James Partridge, founder of the charity Changing Faces, which cam-

paigns for people with facial disfigurement.

Bill Albert, chair of BCOOP's international committee and a member of the Human Genetics Commission, received the award for international human rights, and Dr Tom Shakespeare, academic and writer on bioethics and gender and sexuality, won the award for

human rights in the UK.

Members of the Lin Berwick Trust, which has raised almost £1m for accessible holiday cottages, were also celebrating Lin Berwick's MBE last month. "Lin is a remarkable person and a brave one," said Sue MacGregor, former BBC Today presenter. "We think this is wonderfully well deserved."

Fee policy required for care regulators

A major study into how disabled people get involved in regulating services has called for a national policy on the fees they are paid to take part.

*Users at the heart**, by the Social Care Institute for Excellence, looked at service user involvement in the governing bodies of the new social care regulators.

It found that the approach to the fees and expenses they were paid was inconsistent,

and that income support rules made it impossible for many people who were on benefits to accept a fee.

Overall, participants were positive about their experiences but many mentioned the volume and complexity of paperwork and lack of training in vital skills such as IT.

The report also suggests a peer support e-mail network to share advice and information.

*www.scie.org.uk

Weak foundation to new planning rules

The government's planning bill is failing disabled people and will leave them excluded from education, employment and leisure activities, campaigners have said.

Organisations including the Disability Rights Commission, Habinteg and RADAR, fear that without changes, disabled people will still face barriers.

They want the bill amended to include laws to ensure developers submit an access state-

ment with their planning application. Otherwise, they say, some developers will disregard it, as has been the case with the Part M building regulations.

Speaking at an all-party disability group meeting, Housing Minister Keith Hill failed to quash their concerns. He said he would "like to see an access document in appropriate cases" but didn't think it was necessary to make this a statutory requirement.

In brief

New loo card

A new card scheme* should help people with bowel and bladder problems gain quick access to toilets. It is hoped the "Just Can't Wait" card will explain why holders need urgent access to a loo.

* *Incontact*, tel: 0870 770 3246

Witness scheme

A new measure to help vulnerable witnesses give their evidence in court will be piloted for the first time in Merseyside this month. It will allow "intermediaries" to help witnesses communicate with the court during trials.

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Scots' benefits misery

Disabled people in Scotland are facing obstacles at "every stage" of the benefits system, according to a new report.

Citizens Advice Scotland said people were being denied a basic living income because of the incoherent menu of sickness and disability benefits, each with its own qualifying criteria and process.

The report* said people with long-term conditions were subjected to stressful medical reviews, and claimants were often too intimidated to pursue appeals. CAS chief executive

Kaliani Lyle said a major concern was the accuracy of decision-making, with many overturned on appeal.

A Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) spokeswoman said the report would be "taken into account" as part of ongoing improvements.

Meanwhile, National Audit Office research** found accuracy had fallen since the DWP launched a scheme to monitor decision-making for Disability Living Allowance two years ago.

Eight per cent of decisions

lead to appeal and the proportion decided in favour of the customer is more than half of 90,000 appeals a year and rising.

The DWP said accuracy "remains high" and the NAO report said it had improved in four out of five benefits for which it was measured.

It also denied reports that it was planning to clamp down on disability benefits "cheats" by reviewing medical records.

**Riding the Benefits Rollercoaster*, www.cas.org.uk

***Getting it right, putting it right*, www.nao.gov.uk

Royal challenge to closure plans

Princess Anne has waded into a row between Asian disabled people and a London hospital over the closure of a vital resource centre.

The Princess Royal challenged North West London Hospital Trust chief executive John Pope on a visit to the Asian People with Disabilities Alliance (APDA) over his plans to use the building for filing space and offices.

Visiting Central Middlesex Hospital for celebrations on the International Day of Disabled People (right), she told him it was important to support the centre and warned that closing it would cost the trust more as people turned to the hospital for support services.

APDA got a £450,000 grant a decade ago to turn the hospital's former refectory into an accessible centre for disabled people, but the hospital recently announced it will take back the building in March as part of an expansion programme.

Ashok Ghose, chair of APDA, which is run by disabled people, said they had been "completely



sidelined" in the planning process. "All of a sudden we're being told the lease is going to end and it is going to be used for doctors to give dictation."

Michael Jeewa, APDA director, said: "These are essential services which prevent the inappropriate hospitalisation of disabled people."

Mr Pope said the trust had given APDA the building rent-free for five years but now needed it for medical staff who will not have offices in the new hospital. "I would like to see a future for the group," he added.

Outrage over kids' exam ban

A government ban on children from Northern Ireland with statements of Special Educational Needs taking 11-plus tests for grammar schools smacks of the "dark ages", say campaigners.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) spoke out after it failed to persuade Northern Ireland's Department of Education (DOE) to scrap its ban and allow a 10-year-old girl with brittle bones to sit the test.

She will be assessed instead by an educational psychologist.

Don Leeson, disability policy manager for ECNI, said: "Their viewpoint is almost in the dark ages of segregationist views of education, which has no place in this country."

A DOE spokeswoman said there was "no need for such children to take the transfer tests" as their post-primary education was decided by Education and Library Boards and their parents.

ECNI is also calling on the DOE to bring in Northern Ireland's equivalent of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act this year.

It fears the act, which will address discrimination in education, will not be introduced until 2005, three years after England and Wales's version.

A DOE spokeswoman blamed delays on extensive consultation and the Northern Ireland Assembly's periods of suspension.

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Letter from Brussels

Richard Howitt 



Brussels was taken over last month by the new European Parliament of Disabled People

Last month, Euro MPs “resigned” from our seats in the European Parliament as disabled people took over in Brussels.

Two hundred disabled people from 28 European countries met in the parliament’s main chamber – the first time it has been used by non-MEPs in a decade – to form an historic European Parliament of Disabled People.

The event marked the climax of the European Year of Disabled People 2003. People drawn from grassroots organisations representing all disabilities gave testimonies of their personal experience of discrimination, helping to shape the future of disability policy in Europe.

Two of the most moving stories came from Anita Blom, who described the severe prejudice faced by people who stutter, and Andrea Halder, a woman with Down’s syndrome, who asked: “Why is there such a great fear of people with Down’s? It is not the

disability itself, but how people behave towards us. Do not abort babies with Down’s, but change the negative image about us.”

In my closing address, I challenged the current Italian Presidency of the EU to allow future disability laws to be agreed by majorities in the future EU constitution – removing the threat of veto from any one country.

I also challenged the Greek European Commissioner to formally propose a new comprehensive non-discrimination law for disabled people. I told the parliament that even the Romanian representative had spoken of the official support in her country for this new law.

The Resolution and Manifesto of the European Parliament of Disabled People set down demands from the whole disability movement in Europe, and will form the basis for the future work of our Disability Rights Group of MEPs in the European Parliament.

Richard Howitt MEP is president of the European Parliament All-Party Disability Group, e-mail: ep@edf-fehp.org

Five described

TV channel Five has become the UK’s first public service broadcaster to make its audio described programmes widely available to blind and partially sighted people.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) welcomed the announcement as a “great early Christmas present” for many disabled people.

Five broadcasts about ten hours of audio-described (AD) programmes every week*, but until now these shows and those of the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 have only been available to about 50 homes that took part in a research study.

Now, thanks to BSkyB technology, Five’s AD programmes will be available to the seven

million homes in the UK and Ireland with digital satellite television, after Five decided to broadcast its AD programmes via BSkyB’s satellite. Five is the first public service broadcaster to take up BSkyB’s offer to share the technology, while the others pursue a different solution still under development.

Bob Niven, chief executive of the DRC, said broadcasters had a legal duty to provide AD programmes that could actually be received by “viewers”. He said: “Five and BSkyB have drawn a line in the sand which the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 must now follow.”

Meanwhile, the Royal National Institute of the Blind** has announced a new

partnership with text-to-speech company Rhetorical, to produce audible, synthesised “talking” versions of newspapers and magazines.

Recordings will be faster and cheaper to produce and more flexible to use. They will be delivered via CDs, over the internet or by telephone. The new technology will allow them to be browsed using voice or keyboard commands. There is no launch date yet for the service.

Also, BSkyB is launching peak-time, sign language interpretation of two films on the first Sunday of the month on Sky Movies 9, starting 4 January.

*www.sky.com/disability

**RNIB Helpline, tel 0845 7669999

Call to free trapped thousands

The government has been urged to act now to help thousands of disabled people imprisoned in unsuitable homes.

Disabled campaigners, including Labour MP Anne Begg, joined John Grooms president Baroness Howarth (right) to deliver a letter calling for action to 10 Downing Street.

The disability charity also delivered the findings of a new survey, which revealed that more than one in five physically disabled people said it was difficult to move around or get in and out of their homes.

David Harmer, chief executive of John Grooms Housing Association, said: “There is a



real shortage of suitable homes for physically disabled people, especially wheelchair users, and we fear that this will get worse unless the problems are recog-

nised and addressed.

“This inequality is down to resources and red tape, and the latter must be cut and the former increased significantly.”

Hold on to benefits books, urges RNIB

Tens of thousands of visually impaired people are afraid they may be forced to replace their benefits payment books with an inaccessible alternative, say campaigners.

The RNIB has called on visually impaired people not to give up their books yet, even though the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) says they will be phased out by 2005 and replaced with direct payments into bank or new Post Office card accounts.

Although there will be an “exemption scheme” available, the government has “not been clear about the detail”, according to the RNIB. The charity was due to hold crucial talks on the issue with DWP minister Chris Pond as DN went to press.

Bill Alker, an RNIB spokesman, said blind and partially-sighted people “should not give up their books until there is a suitable exemption scheme in place”.

There have already been complaints that many disabled people find it difficult to use the new cash machines being installed in Post Offices as part of the scheme (DN, April 2003).

A DWP spokeswoman confirmed that it planned to phase out all books by 2005, but said suitable alternatives would be in place by then for those who needed them.

These “exemption services” will include a cheque-based payment system for those who cannot access a card system, she added.

In brief

Housing charter

A national body is working on a new charter to help housing associations improve their homes and services for disabled tenants.

The National Housing Federation is inviting disabled tenants* to contribute ideas to the Disabled Tenants’ Charter, which will be adopted by all English housing associations.

*Tel 020 83520253 or email planitclare@aol.com

As DN went to press, the government had yet to announce the annual benefits upratings that will take effect from April. We hope to include the figures, which will include new levels of DLA, in next month’s issue.

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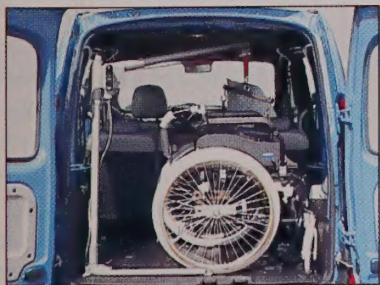
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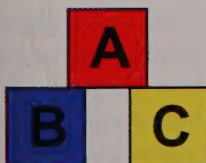
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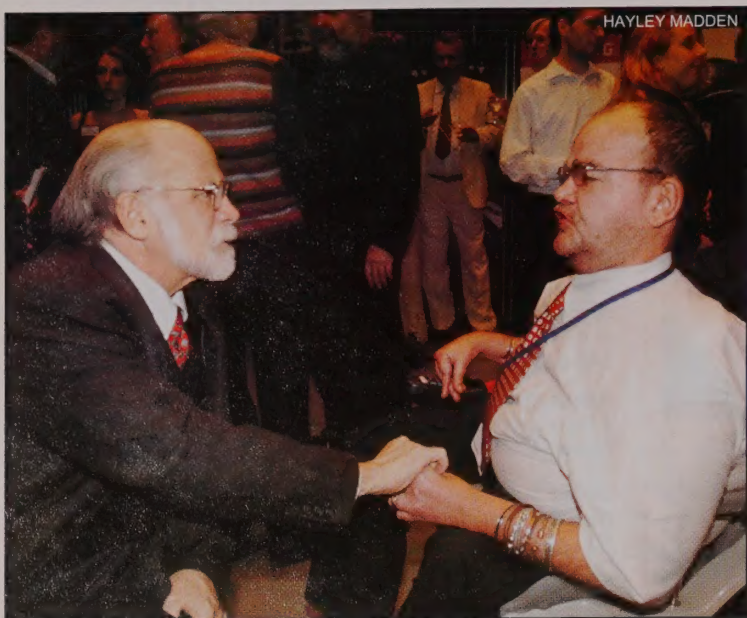


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Peace warrior: US anti-war activist Ron Kovic, who was disabled during the Vietnam War, with the Greater London Authority's David Morris (right) at London Mayor Ken Livingstone's peace reception, held in November to mark opposition to the war and occupation of Iraq.

Targets to stay

The government will continue to set targets for schools, despite concerns that many are refusing to accept disabled children because they might harm their league table positions.

Baroness Cathy Ashton, minister for disabled children, told a Disability Rights Commission (DRC) conference that she believed in setting targets for all children, including those who are disabled.

She said: "I make no apologies for being quite strong in wanting to push our schools and teachers to do all we can for those children."

She also reaffirmed that the government saw "a continuing role for special schools", although not as part of a "separate education system" but as "centres of outreach" linked to mainstream schools.

Her words came after DRC chair Bert Massie told November's Seamless Services for Children with Disabilities conference, which was backed by DN, that some schools were "reluctant to take on children who would damage their targets".

He added: "We need to look at that. Whether targets are

appropriate and how they should either be abolished or refocused."

Philippa Russell, a DRC commissioner, said the government should find a way to record the achievements of disabled children and called for an end to the postcode lottery in services.

Baroness Ashton told the conference that the government's new green paper, *Every Child Matters*, would shift the balance of services towards the early years of a child's life and help mark the start of "a new deal for disabled children and young people".

Cash question over services

The Learning Disability Task Force is to examine whether the government needs to inject more money into services for people with learning difficulties.

The task force, set up to oversee the implementation of the 2001 *Valuing People* (VP) white paper, has formed a new subgroup to investigate the issue.

Rob Greig, director of implementation for VP, said: "That might begin to give us a better handle as to whether the evidence exists for a general increase in funding."

But he said organisations working with people with learning difficulties must get better at telling the government why they need more money.

Mr Greig said there was now "real evidence" that more decision-makers were listening to the views of people with learning difficulties.

His priority areas for the

next year are housing, jobs, families and promoting direct payments, he told DN, after a debate at the Learning Disability Today exhibition in London.

Some panel members welcomed the call by Community Care Minister Stephen Ladyman for a wider acceptance of what people with learning difficulties can achieve.

But Lord Victor Adebawale, chief executive of social care charity Turning Point, said: "It is not acceptable, I think, for any government to talk about people with learning disabilities being equal members of society when in fact it is impossible for that to be achieved because the resources are not there."

Mr Ladyman had revealed that other ministers were due to report to him on how well their departments were implementing VP.



Play away: Tia Harrison, four, a pupil at Springfield School in Witney, Oxfordshire, enjoys a new, inclusive soft play room. The school is one of the country's first purpose-built, integrated primary and special schools. The Lady Taverners charity provided £25,000 towards the cost of the project.

'Appearance' discrimination still rife

A new survey has revealed a "disturbing culture" of appearance-related discrimination in British society.

The poll of 2,283 people for the charity Changing Faces found that 85 per cent of the public believe people with disfigurements are likely to be

discriminated against.

It also found 91 per cent consider a facial disfigurement would be a significant obstacle to getting a customer-facing job, and 93 per cent believe children with disfigurements are likely to be bullied.

James Partridge, chief execu-

tive of Changing Faces, said: "We still have a long way to go to remove the stigma attached to disfigurement. But, encouragingly, 80 per cent of people in the same survey believed that social skills and confidence could help someone with a disfigurement overcome any awkwardness."

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In brief

Corrections

Last month, in our coverage of the parliamentary lobby by people of restricted growth, we should have said that the picture used on the cover of DN was taken by freelance photographer Marion Bull.

We also reported that the newly relaunched National Centre for Independent Living had received £9m from the Department of Health over three years to promote direct payments. In fact, NCIL's share is £280,000 a year over three years. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Braille ID for police

The national police unit that attacks serious and organised crime has introduced new Braille identification cards for its officers. The National Crime Squad cards will include a freephone telephone number for visually impaired or blind people to check officers' identities.

Light-time achiever

The British Healthcare Trades Association has awarded this year's lifetime service award to Gerald Simonds, founder of Gerald Simonds Healthcare, for his work in pioneering the supply of high performance lightweight wheelchairs.

Prisoner on the ward

Roy, 69, spent ten days in hospital without his powered chair

A disabled man was left a "prisoner" on a hospital ward for ten days after being taken into casualty without his wheelchair.

Roy Colton, 69 (right), was admitted to Burnley General Hospital on 3 October with angina, but ambulance staff refused to take his powered chair with him.

While in the hospital, he was not offered a replacement powered chair and was unable to call family or friends because

his money was contained in a pouch in the chair.

He told *DN*: "It was like having no legs for ten days. They didn't offer me a powered chair and I can't use a normal wheelchair because I can't use my left arm.

"I had to call hospital staff to take me to the toilet – even though I could have gone myself in private. The rest of the time, I was laid in bed or sat in a chair for ten days. It was terrible. I was like a prisoner, but at least

prisoners get privileges." Roy complained to the hospital but received no reply or apology.

The hospital trust said arrangements were normally made with patients' families to allow social services to pick up wheelchairs from their homes but it would be putting alternative processes into place where this was not possible.

Lancashire Ambulance Service said it was unable to transport wheelchairs in emergency vehicles for safety reasons.



MS guidelines welcomed Pain drugs dropped

New guidelines for treating people with multiple sclerosis should improve management of the condition, according to disability charities.

The clinical guidelines* for the NHS in England and Wales were produced by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the National Collaborating Centre for Chronic Conditions.

Mike O'Donovan, chief executive of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, called them "the most far-reaching step ever taken towards better management of MS".

They focus on flexibility, the availability of specialist services and the need for patients to be involved in decisions about



their condition.

The guidelines also make recommendations for the diagnosis and treatment of impairments connected with MS, such as fatigue, spasticity and bladder and bowel problems.

They find "some evidence" that complementary therapies

such as reflexology, massage and magnetic field therapy "might be of benefit", but dismiss other treatments such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy. A NICE appraisal of cannabis-based drugs is underway.

Christine Jones, chief executive of the MS Trust (left), the only person with MS on the group which developed the guidelines, said: "From now on, local service providers will be monitored and measured against the new standards.

"It's up to all of us to ensure that the standards of good practice which the guidelines advocate are really met – and where this is not the case, to work with the NHS to achieve them."

*www.nice.org.uk

Up to 4,000 people with rheumatoid arthritis could be left without treatment for their daily pain because of a decision by the government's drugs advisory body.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has dismissed appeals against its original decision not to recommend the drug anakinra for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

It said there was evidence it worked in the short-term, but "very limited data" to support its effectiveness if taken for more than a year.

People already taking anakinra will be allowed to continue until they and their consultants "consider it is

appropriate to stop".

But Mo Atchia, media relations manager for the charity Arthritis Care, said the decision would have an impact on the 4,000 people with rheumatoid arthritis in England and Wales for whom other treatments have not worked.

He said: "These people will be looking at a daily endurance of pain which they have not been able to alleviate through medication."

He said many people with rheumatoid arthritis are being denied the drugs etanercept and infliximab, even though they were approved by NICE in 2002. The charity hoped NICE would change its mind when it reviews the decision in the future.

Thousands harmed in care scandal

A "national scandal" in stroke care is killing and disabling 12,000 people a year, according to The Stroke Association.

Launching a new campaign, Why are we waiting?, the charity said the government was failing to meet its promise to open stroke units in every hospital by April.

Jerry Doyle, its PR director, said: "The loss of life and multiple disabilities being caused through this lack of specialist care is horrific.

"Stroke patients are left on general wards, where there is no specialist equipment or staff.

"There are delays in brain scans and sometimes no brain scans at all."

Melanie Johnson, Public Health Minister, said 171 out of 181 hospitals would have specialist stroke services by April.

*www.stroke.org.uk

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Lucky thirteen Sports cash crisis



Kay Forshaw has become Britain's top ranked women's singles player, after finishing as runner-up in the Wheelchair Tennis Masters tournament in Nottingham.

Forshaw beat two top ten players to reach the final, but could not overcome top seed and world number five, Sharon

Walraven, of the Netherlands, who won the match 6-2, 6-3.

Forshaw has now moved up six places to thirteenth in the world, her highest ever position.

"It was great to do so well," she said. "I've had some close matches against top ten players this year, so I felt as though it was only a matter of time."

National events for disabled sportsmen and women are under threat unless funding is increased, Disability Sport England (DSE) has warned.

The organisation runs the country's only multi-disability events programme, but does not receive any core funding and says it could close if more money is not found.

All disability sport funding goes to the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) via Sport England.

But DSE can only receive a limited amount of this money

for individual events and is also unable to receive Lottery money directly because EFDS has a monopoly on disability sport funding.

A DSE spokesperson said: "If we don't get sponsorship, the country could lose us and that means we would lose a lot of Paralympic champions."

"There's money at grass roots level and money at the elite level, but nobody seems to fund the regional and national events which are the feeders for the Paralympics."

DSE's chief executive,

Gordon Neale, said: "The Lottery does not say, 'We only give to one homeless charity or one drug initiative.' Why then only for one disability sport programme?"

A spokeswoman for Sport England said funding is given to EFDS to divide up because there are "so many disability groups about".

A spokesman for EFDS said funding decisions were made by Sport England, but refused to comment further.

• See also Tanni Grey Thompson, page 24

It's a splash smash

Thirty-nine world records were broken at the national short course swimming championships in Sheffield last month.

Over 230 swimmers took part in the event, which took place in a 25-metre pool and was organised by Disability Sport England.

Most disability swimming championships, including the Paralympics, are held in 50-metre pools.

James Anderson, Sarah Bailey (right), David Roberts and Nyree Lewis were the championship's best swimmers and each set four world records.

They are now hoping to

repeat their success in next year's Paralympics.

Tim Reddish, director of disability swimming for British Swimming, said: "It's great to see our swimmers swim fast and get so many world records."

He said the swimmers now need to repeat their performances in long course championships. "Our main priority is for each athlete to swim a personal best time at Athens. If we do that it will bring medals."

The British swimming squad came third at the Sydney 2000 games and need to win at least 20 golds to stand a chance of topping the Athens medal table.



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500 not out in DN cricket competition

More than 500 disabled cricketers have entered the Disabled Cricketer of the Year Award 2003, run by Cricket World in conjunction with DN.

The national awards – open to cricketers of all ages with both physical and learning disabilities – were set up earlier this year to raise

the profile of disabled cricket.

Jane Tomkins, of Cricket World magazine, said she was delighted with the response. "There have been so many entrants. We are still wading through them and have had to delay the results."

The winners will be announced next month.

In brief

FA access guide

The FA has produced a guide to help football clubs meet the requirements of part three of the Disability Discrimination Act*.

Recommendations include carrying out an audit of facilities to ensure they comply with the new legislation, and a review of ticketing policies to make sure they do not discriminate against disabled people. www.thefa.com

On the ride track

Paralympic gold medallist Lee Pearson has become the first disabled rider to win a title at the National Dressage Championships in Warwickshire.

Pearson won the elementary restricted event against non-disabled riders from across the UK. He also won the grade one disabled class. Pearson was part of the four-strong British team who won the World Dressage Championships earlier this year.



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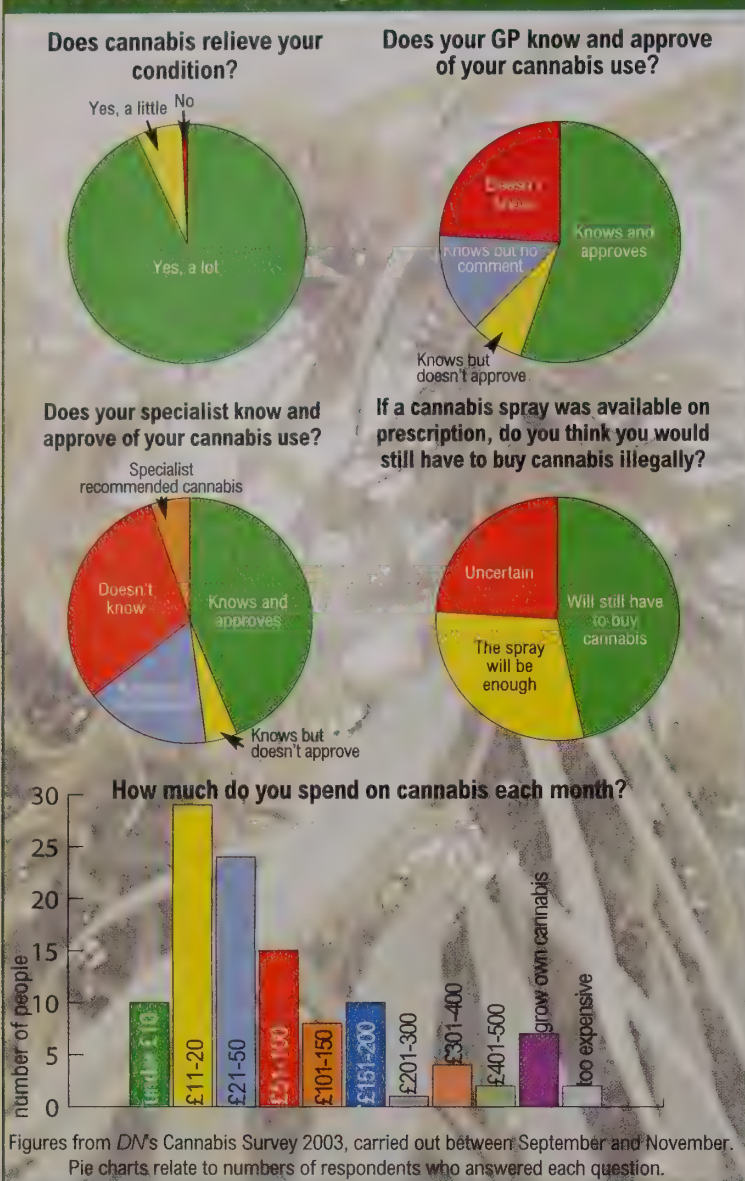
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Cannabis works – and we don't need tests to prove it

DN's cannabis survey, 2003



Disabled people know cannabis works and don't need medical trials to prove it, according to the results of DN's new cannabis survey.

Of the 191 people who have responded so far, 170 said they use cannabis for medicinal purposes and find it relieves their condition. Only one person said he was yet to see any benefits.

The survey shows the extent to which the government's cannabis policy is failing disabled people. Fifteen people said they think cannabis would help their condition but they will not take it because they don't want to break the law. They said they would take it if it was legalised or available on prescription.

And more than a third of respondents said their GPs know and approve of their cannabis use. A similar number said their specialist approves.

Daniel Smith*, who is paraplegic, said: "It was my consultant who told me it works for some people."

Another respondent told DN that three doctors contacted him in a week for information on where other patients could get cannabis. A couple of respondents said their GP



Chocolate factory: Clare and Lezley visiting the THC4MS plant

approves "off the record".

The survey shows that, unsurprisingly, disabled people don't like having to buy cannabis illegally. They have problems obtaining a regular supply and often have to buy "whatever they can" and put up with poor quality. Some cannot afford cannabis, even though they have tried it and know it works for them.

Alain Jaicey, who has osteoarthritis, said he would buy it now if he knew where or who to get it from.

Pete Lawson*, who has full body reflex sympathetic dystrophy, said: "Due to my disabilities, I am unable to grow my own, so am trapped

into dealing with people I'd rather not know."

Most people who responded to the survey smoked cannabis. Many ate Cannachoc cannabis chocolate. Others ate cannabis in cakes or drank it in tea or coffee. A few people also vaporised the cannabis or used cannabis cream.

Although many disabled people have difficulty obtaining their cannabis, this was less of a problem for people with multiple sclerosis (MS), who obtain cannabis chocolate from Therapeutic Cannabis for MS (THC4MS) through the post. THC4MS sends Cannachoc to over 1,200 people with MS but has been criticised for excluding people with other disabilities.

A spokesperson for the organisation said: "If we opened up for other disabled people we would be inundated. We would love to help everybody but we can't." He added that he will help other disabled people's groups make cannabis chocolate to try and ease the current supply problem.

If GW Pharmaceuticals' MS cannabis-based spray is approved then this should help as well. But the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency still hadn't decided, as DN went to press, whether to give the spray the go-ahead.

Lesley Brown, who has ME and arthritis, hopes a prescription cannabis drug will make her life easier and save her money but she, like many other disabled people, doesn't think she will be prescribed it. Others are wary of a synthetic version and say they too will have to continue buying cannabis on the black market or grow their own.

*names have been changed
• The full results from DN's survey are on our website at www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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Cold comfort

In 1999, *DN* began campaigning for Winter Fuel Payments for disabled people. Four years later, the government still hasn't shifted its stance. Severely disabled people still shiver through the winter months, so *DN* continues its campaign

DN's Winter Fuel Payments campaign has been running for four years. It calls for the £200 paid to every pensioner household each year to be extended to severely disabled people aged under 60, who, often through lack of mobility, feel the cold intensely and cannot afford to heat their homes properly. The cost would be £254m a year.

The campaign is supported by the Disability Rights Commission, the All Party Parliamentary Disability Group, 20 disability and caring organisations and over 4,000 disabled people and associates.

So far the Government has refused to be moved. As Work and Pensions Secretary Andrew Smith told *DN* in November last year, "Disability Living Allowance is intended to provide a contribution towards the generality of extra costs faced by severely disabled people as a result of their disabilities."

He referred to 1980s surveys, which showed that the then benefits were well directed and sufficient to cover disability-



related expenditure. "That is why DLA, which has been uprated each year... continues to be paid according a person's care and mobility needs and allows the disabled person complete freedom in how to spend the benefit."

Here, three of the 2,200 severely disabled people who

have responded to *DN's* survey, explain how this "freedom" does not prevent them being cold in winter.

Please urge your MP to sign Early Day Motion number 108, which calls for the winter fuel payment to be extended to severely disabled people under the age of 60.

"We have the same rights as pensioners" – Jenny Keeble, 20, Basildon



Jenny Keeble, 20, from Basildon, Essex, is deafblind and quadriplegic. She receives the higher rate of DLA, both the mobility and care components, as well as incapacity benefit. "I can't maintain my own body heat," she says. "I keep warm over winter by relying on

contributions from the family. It is enough that I have to rely on them for so many other things." Jenny's mother, who is her full-time carer, says: "Disabled people have the same rights as pensioners – it's difficult to keep warm when you have limited mobility."

"The cold severely affects me" – Hazel Mackay, 58, Stirling

Hazel Mackay, 58, lives in Stirling, Scotland. She is a wheelchair user with arthritis who gets the higher rate of DLA. "I have the heating on most of the time," she says, "but not as high as I would like – just enough to stop me getting cold when I'm going

from one room to the next." She wears thermal clothing and uses blankets to cover her legs.

"I don't begrudge benefits for pensioners, but some of them don't need it as much as people like me. I need it more because I'm stuck in a

wheelchair and my lack of mobility means the cold severely affects me."

Mrs Mackay has recently been told that her gas and electricity charges will be rising shortly, which she calculates will cost her an extra £33 each year.

"Our benefits are not enough" – Andrew Thomson, 36, Salisbury



Andrew Thomson, 36, from Salisbury, Wiltshire is paraplegic. He receives the higher rate of DLA and income support. He uses the DLA to pay for his car. The necessity of keeping the house warm over the winter months means he often falls into debt.

"I get cold quickly and it takes a long time to warm up," he says. He wears four layers of clothes and has several duvets on the bed.

"The benefits we get now are just not enough. It's unfair to say that we are not entitled to this payment."

Baywatch

Are people still abusing disabled bays in supermarkets? How much effect is our Baywatch campaign having? Help us in the next stage by reviewing its progress

In January last year a survey by Baywatch volunteers at the car parks of the Big Four supermarkets (Asda, Safeway, Sainsbury's and Tesco) found that 20 per cent of the bays reserved for disabled motorists were being used by vehicles with no blue badge.

A year on, we want to find out if the situation has improved. Please help us by filling in the form below or on



Abuse: at Safeway in Skegness

the *DN* website, www.disabilitynow.org.uk
• Deadline for completed forms is Friday, 23 January.

BAYWATCH SURVEY 2004

Please complete this form for one of the Big Four supermarkets (Asda, Safeway, Sainsbury's and Tesco), based on a visit, preferably at a busy time, **during the week beginning Monday, 12 January 2004**. Then return to *DN*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW. If you visit more than one Big Four supermarket, please photocopy this form or submit forms from our website at www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Name

Address

Contact telephone number

Name of store (please tick)

Asda ☐ Safeway ☐ Sainsbury's ☐ Tesco ☐

Address or location

How many parking bays are provided for disabled customers?

How many vehicles were parked in the bays?

How many vehicles were parked in the bays without a badge?

How many bays were vacant?

If there was abuse of bays did you mention it to staff/manager?

If so, how would you describe their response (please tick)?

Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor ☐

Please use the space below for any comments.

Fights and rights

David Ruebain has always been a fighter – at school, against low expectations, and now, as a much admired human rights lawyer. Nuala Calvi meets him

I expected to find David Ruebain – the lawyer shortlisted for the prestigious Law Society Gazette lifetime achievement award in human rights – sitting in a swanky, north London office.

Instead, I find him sitting in a pokey shared room, at a desk piled high with paperwork. He is still overwhelmed at his status as a household name in education law: “The Chambers guide to the legal profession lists me as a top ranking expert so... I guess I am.”

Ruebain also still talks more like a campaigner than a member of the establishment. “Effective operation of the law is more than just understanding what a piece of legislation says, at least in social welfare law.

“An understanding of the nature of discrimination, the way disabled people can be marginalized, is very important to being able to operate as a lawyer in this field.

“It makes a difference to have a context within which you operate as a lawyer.”

For Ruebain, this context was

having to fight against the low expectations of him as a child with arthrogryposis, a congenital condition which affects mobility and dexterity.

“From ages two to nine, I was in a special day school. I was put there because that’s what happened to disabled children.

“Then at nine I went to an ordinary school, which at the time was very unusual. I went because my mother pushed for it – she felt I wasn’t progressing.

“But when I was 11, my mother died and people persuaded my father to put me into a special boarding school. There was little motivation to learn; being there in itself was

university; I just had no picture of myself in that way. It’s difficult to develop a pupil to their full potential in a special school.”

At last, at 16, with just two O levels to his name, Ruebain took matters into his own hands, and wrote to all his local mainstream schools, demanding a place.

Most didn’t reply, but one offered to meet him, and took him. In the right environment, he passed eight O levels and two A levels, enough to secure him a place at Oxford University.

But while Ruebain’s experience has led him to believe firmly in the “principle

‘I sort of ‘came out’ as a disabled person, when I understood the social model. Before, I’d only associated being a disabled person with being a disaster’

disabling. The staff’s attitude to us, and our own attitude to ourselves because we were disabled, meant my horizons were very limited.

“I didn’t have any expectations of going to

of inclusion”, he is not as outspoken on the special versus mainstream education debate as you might expect for the chair of pressure group the Alliance for Inclusive Education.

“I firmly believe in inclusion,



Legal eagle: Ruebain at work in his Wood Green office

but how that plays out in practice will vary from child to child and school to school. That might sound like a cop-out, but we’re in a process of transition and probably the mainstream will look quite different to how it does now.”

Ruebain is, however, aware that most of his clients who have chosen special schools for their children, have done so because the mainstream has failed them. “I’ve never met a parent with a philosophical preference for special schools,” he says.

Ruebain’s involvement in the Alliance goes back to the time when he left university and first discovered the existence of a disability movement.

“I came across a number of disabled activists and writers who were very eye-opening. I got introduced to the idea of disability as a social construction which was a very important thing for me – it provided a framework in which I could make sense of the feelings and thoughts I had had – that things didn’t happen to me because I have Arthrogryposis, but because of the way society thinks about people with Arthrogryposis.

“I sort of ‘came out’ as a disabled person, I feel, when I read and understood all this stuff. Before, I’d only associated being a disabled person with being a disaster.”

While he has left much of the “grassroots stuff” behind him, and misses it from time to time, Ruebain gets a kick out of pushing boundaries in his legal work instead.

“A few years ago we took a case regarding disabled children getting therapy such as

occupational, speech and language therapy, in school.

“The court decided when you have a statement, the LEA has the ultimate responsibility for arranging therapy, even though the health authority normally does it.

“It’s still the case that some children don’t get what’s on their statement. But they know because of this case they can enforce it.”

He has also just been appointed co-chair of the Law Society’s mental health and disability committee, which involves him in discussions around how disability law develops. One of the things they will be pushing for is a new definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act.

“The act definitely doesn’t give us everything we want, but it’s beginning to have some bite. There are aspects of discrimination now which can be dealt with which couldn’t before.

“In education, it’s forcing schools to recognise disability as a discrimination issue, not a medical tragedy.

“But I see many schools who have no idea about their duties to disabled students – I’m sure some have never heard of it.”

Nevertheless, Ruebain has an enviable faith in the march of progress.

“Prejudice and discrimination are irrational. They are not born of intelligent thinking, but social arrangements that don’t benefit anyone. I think we’re becoming more rational as a society and I’m very optimistic things will be even better in 20 years.”

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The future's ad-fab

Mainstream advertisers usually ignore Britain's disabled millions. But ad-makers are getting bolder, and new government targets to promote inclusivity mean disability is more likely than ever to be coming to a screen – or billboard – near you. Nuala Calvi reports

Female workers gossiping about the “talent” in the office: it's a familiar sight, repeated every day, in companies around the world.

Except in this case, one of the women is deaf and is using a videophone to speak to her friend, giving her the added advantage of being able to point out the guy at the photocopier over her shoulder. Until he turns around and sees what she's up to.

The advert in question, for BT, proved a great success. Non-disabled audiences could relate to the situation and its humour, while the ad won a *Marketing Week* award for its portrayal of disability.

Images of Disability, the government initiative sponsoring the award, has now been running for a year.

It was set up after Tony Blair declared his intention to “mainstream” images of disability into all government advertising. Reviewing its progress last month,

directly targeted at them. The result has been a dearth of disabled people in advertising, and their persistent portrayal as “victims”.

Both are aspects the initiative has tried to challenge, with noticeable results. Government advertisers have been subtly dropping wheelchair users, signers and people of restricted growth into ads on childcare, tax credits, drug awareness and the New Deal, to name a few.

As in real life, disabled people appear out of the blue in shopping centres or marketplaces, in crowd scenes or as part of a series of vignettes.

In a year, the target of one in five ads including a disabled person has almost been achieved. The message this sends out is one of inclusion.

“The complaint in British advertising has been that we're just not there. That sends out the message we're not part of society,” says disabled writer and comedian Laurence Clark. “I see more prominence of

years ago which got a lot of complaints. They had a guy in a wheelchair next to their partner and a big headline saying, ‘Sex is a problem’. Underneath, in smaller writing, it said, ‘Helen is a screamer’. You had to read both bits, but because it was on billboards, people driving past didn't stop to read the small print.”

Meanwhile, ads which use a disabled person as the main character remain rare. Members of the Images of Disability working group, formed of government and industry representatives, say advertisers and ad agencies often simply hadn't thought of including a disabled person in a campaign but tended to be enthusiastic once the idea was put to them.

A network of “disability champions” has now been set up and all government briefs request that advertisers consider disability. But it is a long way from being instinctive, in the way that including ethnic minorities has become.

And the next step is to be bolder and more creative with the kinds of portrayals used.

“We've got past the stage of thinking, ‘oh, we've got to put a disabled person in’,” says Steve O'Neill, head of marketing at the DWP and the group's chair.

“It was a necessary first step, but we are trying to think creatively about what characters you could use where.”

In the commercial sector, there are even fewer examples of disabled people in advertising, and hardly any who don't conform to the white stick/wheelchair stereotype.

But where there have been, these are perhaps more striking: think Mat Fraser talking on his mobile with a hands-free kit on the bus for Virgin phones.

The problem here is that it is seen as a great creative idea – but a one off. “The truth is, creative

“Creative teams will think, ‘Wouldn't it be great to get a disabled actor’, for example, to add impact. Then next time they'll move somewhere else to be original”

government marketing people and advertisers identified the BT ad as the approach they want to follow, using disability creatively rather than incidentally in the script.

“The image of disabled people came across in a very natural way. It was not tokenism; there was a strong link to a product,” says Cilla Snowball, head of Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO, its creators. “It is possible to get a non-disabled audience to identify with a main character who's disabled.”

Unfortunately for other brands, disabled people have traditionally only been featured in ads raising money for charity or where a product is being

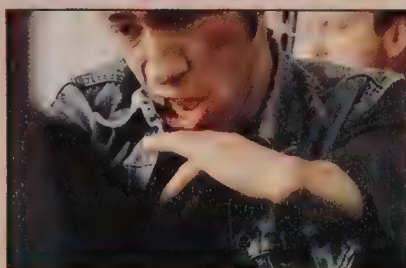
disabled people in advertising now. Things are improving, but there's a long way to go.”

Raw numbers are only part of the battle. Other ads are going further, challenging the assumptions of mainstream audiences about what disabled people are capable of. A TV and billboard campaign for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about childcare shows a wheelchair user playing basketball with children he is caring for, subverting ideas that disabled people are objects of care.

But it can go wrong, according to Clark. “The Department for Education and Employment did some ads a few



Sex problem.



▲ **Client:** BT
Campaign: Talent spotting
Response: Positive – non-disabled audience can identify with main character who is disabled

◀ **Client:** Department for Education and Employment
Campaign: See the Person
Response: Not great – people driving past didn't stop to read the small print

▲ **Client:** Virgin mobile
Campaign: See red then see Virgin Mobile
Response: Positive – strong use of disabled main character

▼ **Client:** Department for Work and Pensions
Campaign: Targeting Fraud
Response: Positive – sends out message of inclusion

teams will all of a sudden think, ‘Wouldn't it be great to get a disabled actor’, for example, to add impact. Then next time they'll move somewhere else to be original,” says John Poorta, of agency Leo Burnett. “The issue is getting a momentum.”

And advertisers' fears that using disabled people is seen as making a statement, because it is “out of the ordinary”, are still there. The legacy of charity advertising means they are scared of looking manipulative.

So Images of Disability will focus next on commercial advertisers, showing them, through the lessons learned by government, the rewards that can be reaped.

“Once we got over the idea that including disability was not detrimental but actually improved the ad – by countering prejudice and by contributing to good advertising as well – it was a win-win situation,” says O'Neill. “This is an idea whose time has come.”

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Cannabis hopes, TV ‘jokes’



January

- Professional squash player Rebecca Macree (*above*), who is ranked ninth in the world and is also deaf, was banned for six weeks for calling a referee a “tosser”. The official had handed her two warnings for leaving the court to check the score. DN’s reporter, though, escaped unscathed from his meeting with Macree and found her to be charming off-court company.
- Plans for the first disabled people’s parliament sparked fears of yet another rift within the disabled people’s movement.
- Every police chief in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was advised to remind officers that they should only ever park in disabled bays during emergencies – which don’t include trips to buy their lunchtime sandwiches.

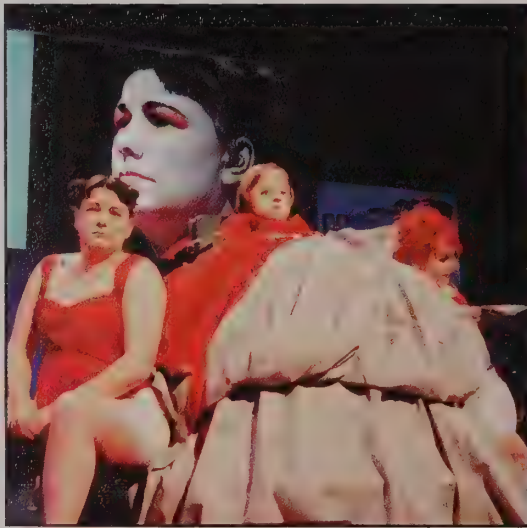
April

- Julie Fernandez, of *The Office* fame, made one of many media appearances during 2003 by helping to launch a Disability Rights Commission campaign to highlight discrimination in education (*right*).
- Former boxing champ Michael Watson prepared for his six-day attempt at the London Marathon by warming up with an interview with DN.
- Disability activists attacked the BBC for allowing big-earning stars such as Jonathan Ross to get away with repeatedly targeting disabled people with offensive gags.
- The government announced it was finally going to recognise British Sign Language as an official language.



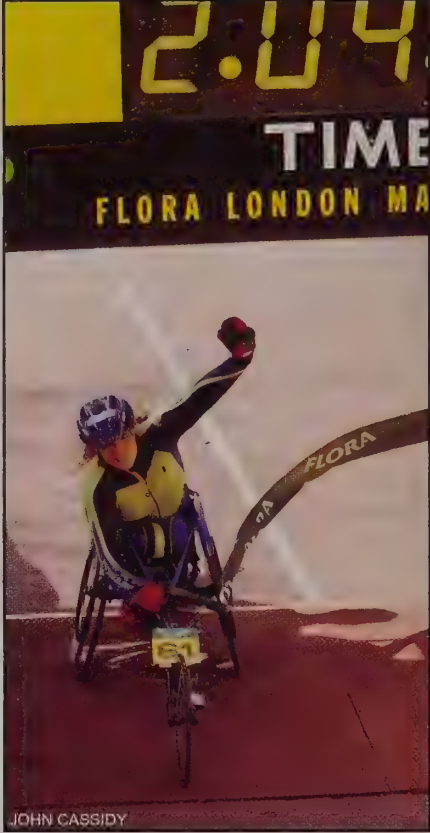
February

- Disabled poet Valerie Laws (*above*) was awarded £2,000 to spray the backs of sheep with words from one of her poems, and then observe the movements of the animals.
- The family of deaf aid worker Ian Stillman (*right*), wrongly jailed for drugs offences in India, called on the Foreign Office to provide better help for disabled people arrested abroad.
- Baroness Hollis was accused of using statistics to “cover up” the government’s failure to find evidence to justify not extending winter fuel payments to severely disabled people under 60.
- Eight airlines said they didn’t think the damage of wheelchairs during flights was a serious issue, despite more than 100 DN readers contacting us to disagree.



March

- Graeae performed at the London launch of the European Year of Disabled People (*left*).
- In the wake of her MBE, artist Alison Lapper told DN how headlines like “Bravest Mother in Britain” made her “heave”.
- The Post Office admitted introducing cash machines that were inaccessible to hundreds of thousands of disabled people because it feared losing customers if the project was delayed.
- A disabled woman was thrown off her college counselling course for, unbelievably, being in too much pain.



May

- Italian Francesca Porcellato (*above*) beat Britain’s Tanni Grey-Thompson into second place in the women’s London Wheelchair Marathon.
- The Commons work and pensions select committee warned the government that its schemes to boost the employment of disabled people would fail without more money. Hardly rocket science.
- RADAR became the latest disability charity to make redundancies in a bid to cut costs.
- Top chef Fergus Henderson, who has Parkinson’s, told DN how the condition had affected his cooking: “Maybe it takes a little longer these days but I don’t get frustrated – there’s no point.” He cooked up a couple of tasty recipes for readers.

June

- The charity MIND called for the drug regulatory system to be dismantled in favour of one driven by patient power, after a demonstration outside the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency over the antidepressant Seroxat.
- Diana Morgan, new boss of the Limbless Association, told DN how pictures of 12-year-old Ali Ismail Abbas, who lost both arms in the bombing of Baghdad, sparked a wave of media and public interest in issues surrounding amputation.
- A survey, by Polls Apart Cymru, found the accessibility of polling stations in Wales in the May local elections had got worse since the 2001 general election. One polling station was situated in a tiny caravan, where staff had to bring ballot papers out to anyone unable to climb inside.



and sheep – the year in *DN*



July

- Therese Hunt (*above*) was one of 12 disabled teenagers who won the chance to meet Tony Blair in a competition, by describing what they would do if they were PM for the day. Unsurprisingly, none of them mentioned invading a Middle Eastern country.
- Disabled people opposed to legalised assisted suicide protested outside the House of Lords as peers debated the issue.
- A blind man thrown out of a bookshop because he was accompanied by his guide dog, lost his case when he took action under the Disability Discrimination Act. The owner claimed he was concerned about the health and safety risk of children falling over the dog's lead.



August

- *DN*'s Freedom in Focus competition for disabled photographers received a record number of entries, including prize-winning *A Quick Tipple* (*above*) by Thomas Mathias.
- Two people with learning difficulties had their benefits books ripped up in front of them by a Jobcentre Plus officer who had decided they couldn't look after their own finances.
- Campaigners told *DN* that disabled people who take up direct payments are being left to "sink or swim" in emergencies because of a lack of reliable agency cover. One woman, whose PA hadn't shown up, had to wheel herself to a pub to find someone to put her to bed.

Good year, bad year

Good year

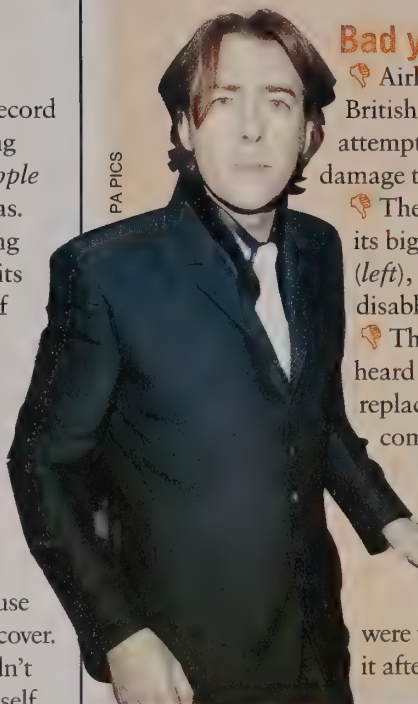
- ✎ Campaigners who forced Parliament and the media to start taking seriously the use of offensive jokes about people of restricted growth.
- ✎ The National Centre for Independent Living, which relaunched as an independent body.
- ✎ The organisers of Liberty, London's first disability arts festival, and Mayor Ken Livingstone for agreeing to make it an annual event.

Bad year

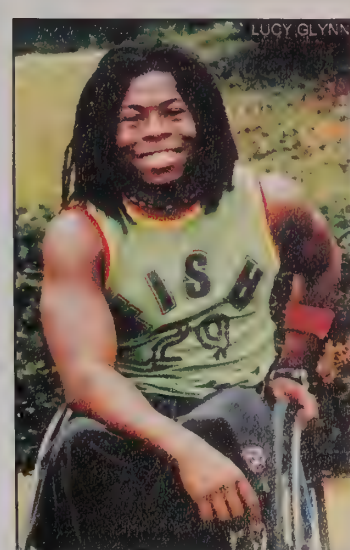
- ✎ Airlines – with the possible exception of British Airways, there has been little attempt to take seriously concerns about damage to wheelchairs on flights.
- ✎ The BBC repeatedly failed to act to stop its big-name stars, like Jonathan Ross (*left*), from telling offensive jokes about disabled people.
- ✎ The Disability Rights Commission heard that it is to be abolished and replaced by a single equality commission.

The jury is still out...

The European Year of Disabled People – some events were fantastic, others were the dampest of squibs. *DN* will review it after the year officially closes in February.



PA PICS



LUCY GLYNN

September

- ✎ TV presenter and wheelchair basketball star Ade Adepitan (*above*) talked to *DN* about his next goal: to win a medal at this year's Paralympics.
- ✎ A pair of blind drivers wrested two land speed records from the grasp of a non-disabled driver.
- ✎ An event planned to celebrate the European Year of Disabled People was cancelled at the last minute after council officials in Brent admitted the venue had no accessible emergency exit.



NUALA CALVI

October

- London's first disability arts festival (*above*) drew thousands of people to Trafalgar Square, as part of celebrations of the European Year of Disabled People.
- The capital's mayor, Ken Livingstone, told *DN* that private businesses in London were not doing enough to reach out to potential disabled employees.
- *DN* launched a new national survey in the wake of concerns that disabled people who use cannabis for medicinal reasons were still at risk of being arrested.
- A coalition of charities warned that local authorities were illegally trying to charge for essential care services for disabled kids.

November

- The Disability Rights Commission launched a campaign to force companies to improve access in advance of new duties to be introduced in 2004.
- *DN* launched its new Hacked Off campaign to increase the number of disabled journalists and journalism students.
- Survivors of abuse at two residential homes for people with learning difficulties won a nine-year battle for justice, after the council that failed to prevent and halt the regime agreed to pay them an estimated £1 million in damages.
- The launch of the UK's first disabled people's parliament attracted high profile speakers, much media interest and its first resignation – within an hour of the start of its second day.



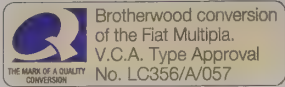
December

- ✎ Disabled activists waved banners, chanted slogans and even staged a mock funeral, as part of a series of peaceful protests by the Disabled People's Direct Action Network at the London headquarters of four leading disability charities (*above*), in a call for them to shut up shop.
- ✎ The long-awaited results of a trial of cannabis-based drugs proved disappointingly inconclusive.
- ✎ *DN* launched a new campaign calling for stricter sentences for those who harm people with learning difficulties.
- ✎ A peer asked non-disabled members of the House of Lords not to use its accessible parking bays and toilets.

Happy New Year From Brotherwoods

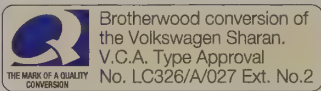
Being "Up-Front" takes on a new meaning for passengers who travel in their own wheelchairs with a Brotherwood Conversion of the **FIAT Multipla**

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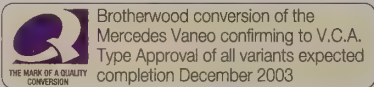
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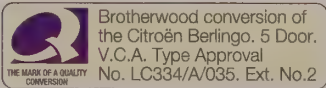
Mercedes Brotherwood Klaster™ conversion from £22,973.70 Petrol or Diesel engines with manual or automatic transmissions. Low & level floor with 1500mm (60") headroom.



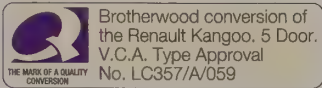
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ILLUSTRATIONS: CLARE CURTIS

Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the editor
Mary Wilkinson, Disability Now,
6 Market Road, London N7 9PW,
minicom: 020 7619 7332,
fax: 020 7619 7331,
e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



The big year: *DN's* 20th birthday

Twenty years ago this year, *Disability Now* was born. It was small – 12 pages – a tabloid, black-and-white except for red on the cover, with only nine advertisements in that first issue. The “DN team” were the editor, a reporter, and a part-time circulation manager.

Disability Now was still “the newspaper of The Spastics Society”, but we were no longer *Spastics News*, thanks to the support of the chief executive, Sir John Cox. The new title gave us the chance to branch out, cover the whole field of disability, and be topical.

It was all a far cry from the *DN* of today. Here we are, a national, campaigning newspaper with a dozen staff, including disabled people, and a fortnightly supplement, operating in what seems like a different world. There is a Disability Discrimination Act, a Disability Rights Commission, and a Scope which is re-inventing itself. Many more disabled people have opportunities to work and speak out for what they want.

This year we are celebrating the transition. In March, the month of the name switch, we will run a special celebration issue, and later in the year there will be a big party kindly hosted by Lord Ashley, chair of the All Party Parliamentary Disability Group.

Every month we will bring you a snippet from the same month 20 years ago.

If you have any memories of *Disability Now* or comments about the newspaper that you would like to share with others in the March issue, please write or email me. The addresses are on page 2.

Meanwhile, I leave you with these points from January 1984:

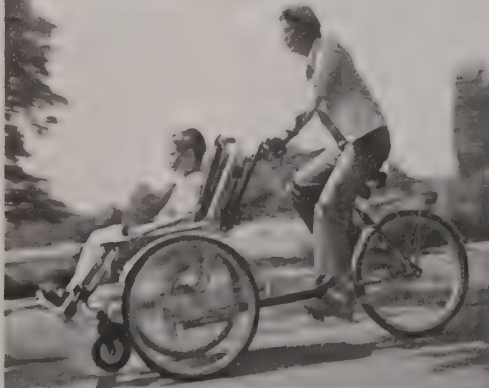
- The Severe Disablement Allowance announced on 1 December will replace the household duties test, and benefit, it is estimated, 20,000 people. There are, however, serious flaws...
- Bob Wareing's Bill received its Second Reading in the House of Lords but since the government will give it no time in committee it has been effectively killed. However people are asked to urge their MPs to sign EDM 320 (sounds familiar!)
- Finally, on a lesser note, *Spastics News* has taken delivery of an Apple computer to help with its circulation, which – naturally – is rising.

Mary Wilkinson

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Heaven help timid parents

Thank you for publishing Rosemary Jarvis' “I take nothing a ‘professional’ says on trust” (*DN*, October). It was long overdue and mirrored so many of my feelings regarding the interaction of the “professionals” with myself and my son. He has learning difficulties and challenging behaviour.

Incidentally, why in this day and age is a lot more notice still taken of what you say at meetings if you are a couple, rather than if you are a lone parent?

I find I have to get aggressive almost to the point of rudeness before any notice is taken of what I say. Heaven help the timid parent who does not speak up.

Anne McKenzie
Kings Heath, Birmingham

DAN ignores others' needs

I have always had great respect for disability rights campaigners, but DAN's attack on national charities (*DN*, December) left a nasty taste in my mouth.

As the mother of a profoundly learning disabled son (who is a wheelchair user), I would like nothing more than for these charities not to be needed. However, my son will never be capable of leading an independent life, doesn't have a voice of his own and depends on me to speak up for his right to be respected as a valuable human being. He depends on me to battle for services to

Parliaments and demos

The funding the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) received from the European Parliament to set up the UK Disabled People's Parliament (UKDPP) has now run out and it is being left to individual Members to fund themselves. Yet most disabled people are on benefits. It cost me £250 to attend the opening.

I have written to various MPs, MEPs and my local council expressing my concern, but to no avail. The UKDPP should not be a flash in the pan. How can it ever meet again without more funding?

An organisation representing all disabled people can be a very powerful tool. But the current campaign by Disability Action Network (DAN) is wrong.

Most big disability organisations should have a percentage of disabled people involved, but an organisation run solely by disabled people is wrong, as evidenced in the recent AGM of the BCODP – nothing but in-house fighting.

You need people at the helm who are not motivated solely by personal disability agendas and who have sound business acumen.

Patrick Horan
London SE16

improve his quality of life.

Thankfully, charities such as Mencap and Scope also speak up and campaign for children and adults like my son, and I, for one, am glad they do, as many of us are often too exhausted by day-to-day living to shout very loudly ourselves.

The campaigners in DAN are guilty of exactly what they accuse these charities and the Government of doing: excluding and ignoring the needs of other disabled people who have very different needs from their own.
Gail Hanrahan
Chalgrove, Oxfordshire

A new tool for young people

It is with the same depth of unease that Chris Channon MBE feels that I contact you about his comments on facilitated communication (*DN*, December). When he attacks Marisa Makeith and her means of communication, he also attacks many more people: me, my mother, my PAs, three schools and their staff, a senior educational psychologist, my college and the GCSE and A level examination boards.

I have known Marisa and Caroline for many years and I

find it offensive to have someone attack Marisa's intellect based on scant knowledge of her.

Facilitated communication is new, innovative and scary to many people. We young people are using the modern tools at our disposal to communicate, sometimes for the first time in our lives, and if the only reason you cannot accept it is because you don't like what you hear us say, maybe you should look at your problems rather than ours.
Blake Williamson
Sheffield

Teen spirit



by Jamie Albrecht

My story is pretty simple. I went to a mainstream school and never had many problems because apparently I am good at making friends.

I used to go to a club for boys in a church hall. We played games and I was the only disabled kid there. After that I joined the older group but left after a while because I was doing something else.

Most of the time at the club we made things so it was easy for me to join in. Sometimes the boys played games like dodge ball and I couldn't join in. Then the vicar would take me to one side and show me card tricks. They really did their best to include me.

When I heard about the All Together Better project from the Barking and Dagenham Centre for Independent Living I was really pleased that younger kids would get more chances than I did.

The project helps find accessible clubs and groups for disabled children whatever their disability. Now children in this area have over 80 clubs from archery to yoga, and they get to choose what they want to do.

The best thing about the project is that they can provide support workers to help children go to the club and fit in with kids who are not disabled. Maybe if I'd had that support I could have played dodge ball with the other kids at my club.

I think it's well good that disabled kids and non-disabled kids get to be friends and do stuff together. It's easy if you know how, and all together better!

The All Together Better project is a disabled children's social inclusion project funded by the Children's Fund and run by the Barking and Dagenham Centre for Independent Living. For more information on the project, contact Karen West on 0208 227 5412.

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THE DEAL IS, YOU'RE NOT ALONE

back chat

Welcome to *DN's* new diary column, reporting from the more overgrown corners of the disability field.

● Leicestershire Post Polio Network has issued a warning to avoid its old website – or be faced with an eyeful of Russian porn. Its old domain, www.poliouk.org, has been bought by a Russian businessman and is apparently now hosting “hardcore pornography”.

● Hands up who wants to be shadow minister for disabled people this month.

When the Tories were scouting for a replacement for Tim Boswell in June, the name of Paul Goodman MP emerged and duly appeared in the conference brochure. But, at the last minute, he was replaced by Nigel Waterson.

Unfortunately, he lasted just four months, until the ejection of Iain Duncan Smith as party leader.

And Mr Waterson's replacement? None other than Paul Goodman MP.

Backchat wishes him luck in surviving until February.

'It's time to decide who we want running disability sport'

Funding for British sport has been going through big changes in recent years. The catalyst for many of these changes was the British Olympic team's under-performance at the 1996 Atlanta Games. There was a feeling at the time that sport needed more money to produce a higher class of athlete.

Since then, funding has increased in almost all areas of sport thanks partly to the National Lottery.

To benefit from Lottery funding, a sport or an athlete must have World Class status. But for individual athletes, getting and maintaining World Class status – and the funding that goes with it – is not easy. To maintain World Class status you have to consistently perform in the world top three. Often you're given yearly targets that are around world-record pace. And for some team sports, you're required to finish on the medal podium at every



Tanni Grey-Thompson

'Who will hold the purse strings to the cash that will make such a difference to the lives of talented, hopeful athletes?'

event you attend. This criteria is more strict than the funding rules for non-disabled athletes.

So, while many local clubs are inclusive and work hard to offer help to anyone who wants to participate, discrimination still exists.

The numbers of disabled athletes are not increasing in line with the increased coverage of disability sport. Instead, there are many young disabled people who still find it hard

to get into sport.

Part of the problem is that the world of disability sport is a complex one. There are too many governing bodies that cross sports and disability groups – eight different bodies could claim to represent me.

The reason many of these groups were formed is that for years mainstream governing bodies excluded disabled people at higher levels of sport and offered little support to those who wanted to make it to national level.

In the past, sport for disabled people has had little to do with disability politics, but in the near future some tough decisions will have to be made over who is going to manage disability sport. The responsibility will be a huge one: they will hold the purse strings to the cash that will make such a difference to the lives of talented, hopeful athletes.

Should it be the mainstream governing bodies, many of which do not have a good record

of supporting disabled people? Or should it be the national disability sports organisations, which have done so much work to get the young people to where they are today? Without these organisations, I, for one, would not be where I am.

I believe the answer is a little of both. Mainstream governing bodies should bear responsibility for everyone who wants to be involved in sports – that includes young disabled athletes.

But they will need to work alongside the national disability sports organisations, the people who understand and who have always fought for disabled athletes.

Right now I still need convincing that they can bear this responsibility, because it is a large task, and the one thing that we find hardest to do in British sport is not win medals, but to talk with each other.

If we could at least do that then I would feel much more confident about the future.

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The white stuff

Recent developments in sports kit mean ski slopes are more accessible than ever. Helen Smith opens *DN's* series of holiday specials by monoskiing in the Cairngorms

When the idea of a skiing holiday was first suggested to me last year, I thought what a fantastic idea. I love trying new sports and meeting people.

I'd been on skiing holidays before I lost my limbs to meningococcal septicaemia, but I couldn't imagine how someone with my disability would be able to ski – I'd always thought legs would be pretty essential. However, after a week skiing in the Cairngorms with the Uphill Ski Club and subsequent trips to Milton Keynes Snowzone with the British Ski Club for the Disabled (BSCD), I'm well and truly hooked. So hooked that I've just booked myself in for another week in Italy with the Uphill in January. I can't wait.

For my first attempt at skiing, I used what is known as a bi-ski. This is basically two skis mounted underneath a rigid seat. It's virtually impossible to capsize, and even



the end of the week I could ski a whole red run without falling over, and I even managed a jump. I came home from the holiday with a real sense of achievement and some lifelong friends.

Having skied before on two legs, I would say that monoskiing is certainly harder. You can't do a nice, slow snow-plough; you either go fast or you stop. But there are advantages too. You don't get tired legs, and I also found that a lot of the people on the piste keep their an eye on your progress: you can't be invisible

over numerous times, ending up in various puddles of melted snow, I always stayed as warm as toast.

When I returned from the Cairngorms, I was determined to get in more ski practice, so I've been to the Snowzone in Milton Keynes a couple of times with BSCD.

Unlike skiing on the mountain, there isn't much space, and skiing into pillars is a common occurrence for many skiers. However, the pillars are all covered in padding.

Some of the British disabled ski team also train at Milton Keynes and on one occasion I was able to pick up a few tips from paralympic monoskier Russell Docker.

Without hands I will always need assistance on ski lifts, but other monoskiers are able to ski completely independently. A monoskier can use a ski lift by hooking a quick release cord around the button. It's always advisable to have someone ready at the top to push the stop button if the quick release doesn't work. I only experienced button lifts in Scotland, but in Italy I'll be trying out chair lifts.

All skiers are now advised to wear crash helmets and after being hit on the head several times by flying button lifts, I can see that it's a good idea.

All types of disability are catered for by both Uphill and BSCD – be it a physical disability or learning disability. Disabled skiing is now known as "Adaptive skiing", as equipment is adapted to suit the disability.



Many of the standing skiers on my trip started off with the front of their skis fixed together. This is to help with control.

The BSCD have also told me that they believe there is nobody who they couldn't get skiing in some shape or form. So, if you fancy a holiday with a difference, or you just want to try something new, I recommend giving skiing a go. Just be prepared to spend a fair amount of time lying in the snow.

Ski list

The Uphill Ski Club of Great Britain

Cairngorm Mountain,
Via Aviemore, Invernesshire,
PH22 1RB,
tel/fax: 01479 861272
info@uphillskiclub.co.uk
www.uphillskiclub.co.uk

British Ski Club for the Disabled

tel: 01395 239088,
www.bscd.org.uk

'I couldn't imagine how someone with my disability would be able to ski – I'd always thought legs to be pretty essential'

people with very limited movement can ski using one. However, after a morning shooting down the mountainside on a bi-ski, I felt ready to try out a monoski.

The monoski is, as the name suggests, a seat with just one ski underneath, and it is much more manoeuvrable than the bi-ski. However, the ability to monoski does depend on the severity of your disability.

Initially, the Uphill instructors weren't sure I'd be able to use the monoski, as to control it you have to be able to hold "outriggers" – poles with little skis on the end. I wear a prosthetic on my right arm, so I had no way of holding the left outrigger. In the end, a roll of duct tape solved the problem; the pole was taped to my arm. Simple but effective.

My instructors warned me I would fall over a lot while using the monoski, and they were right. On my first day, I spent more time lying in the snow than skiing. It can be painful too – when you fall from it, the seat hits you in the back, taking the wind out of you.

It was a shaky start, but by

on a monoski. That's either a blessing or a curse, depending on your point of view.

Before going on my skiing holiday, I bought a pair of salopettes and a ski jacket. I'd wanted to buy kit second hand in case I didn't like skiing, but after continuously getting outbid on the internet auction site eBay, I got fed up and bought it new.

I'd advise anyone going skiing to have warm, waterproof attire. I'm glad I did, because even though I fell

Disability Now's comprehensive holiday continued in the February 2004 issue

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Richard

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email: richard.gresham@scope.org.uk

Patrick

Tel: 020 7619 7320
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As bookings are brisk for 2004 – don't miss your dates – take a look at www.norfolkdisabled-friendlycottages.co.uk or telephone: 01485 578603.



Michael Morgan went up Swiss mountains on a cable car, crossed the lake on a boat, went on buses and trains – and everything was accessible

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Luzern (or Lucerne) is probably the most picturesque city in Switzerland and, as I found out, a real gem of a holiday location for disabled people. With its lakeside setting, its castellated city walls and medieval bridge, Luzern is exactly what you think a Swiss city should look like.

There was an initial near disaster: my recommended hotel turned out to be a nightmare for

access. You know, lifts that won't take wheelchairs, bathroom doors that were too narrow, no specialised equipment for the bathroom. Maybe it was a warning that disabled people should not put their full faith in Internet booking.

All was not lost, however. Following a hasty search we found a truly excellent location. Boasting no less than six fully accessible bedrooms and

adjoining bathrooms, the Hotel Continental Park proved ideal. Because it was beside the railway station, which in turn is virtually on the lake shore where the boat cruise stations are, all our transport requirements were taken care of at a single stroke.

Access is guaranteed on all the major boat trips and excursions to the surrounding mountain tops. The only query was whether all the cable cars

would accept disabled travellers, and they did. This gave us a travel radius of 40 km, effectively the length of the lake. By train you could reach Ticino on the other side of the Alps in a few hours or even get as far as Milan if the fancy took you.

One of our first excursions was by boat down the whole length of Lake Luzern to Brunnen where we drank coffee in the same lakeside café as

Richard Wagner and Hans Christian Andersen once did. Sailing back to Luzern through the mists and cloud which had enveloped the lake was a mystical, Wagnerian experience.

Another day we went to Mt Pilatus, a massive table-top mountain overlooking Luzern. To get there, we took the boat to Alpnachstad and then a clogged railway line – the steepest mountain railway in the world I was told, and yes, it felt like it! We arrived on the summit with its panoramic views of central Switzerland. Afterwards we came down via a series of three cable cars to Kriens, a suburb of Luzern, and simply hopped on the local bus (fully accessible of course) to arrive back at the railway station. A round trip almost, and one to remember.

Luzern itself is worth visiting. Take an initial tour on the fully accessible City Train, which operates from the front of the imposing Hotel Scherzhof on the southern shore front. It runs every hour most days and is great as an orientation.

A must see is the *lowendenkmal*, an image of a dying lion cut into a sheer rock face. It was constructed in the early 19th Century to commemorate the 700 Swiss Guards who died defending the French king Louis XVI in the French Revolution. Like many absolute monarchs of his time, Louis XVI brought a personal bodyguard of foreign mercenaries to defend him from his own people but, when the revolution ousted the king, his bodyguards were slaughtered.



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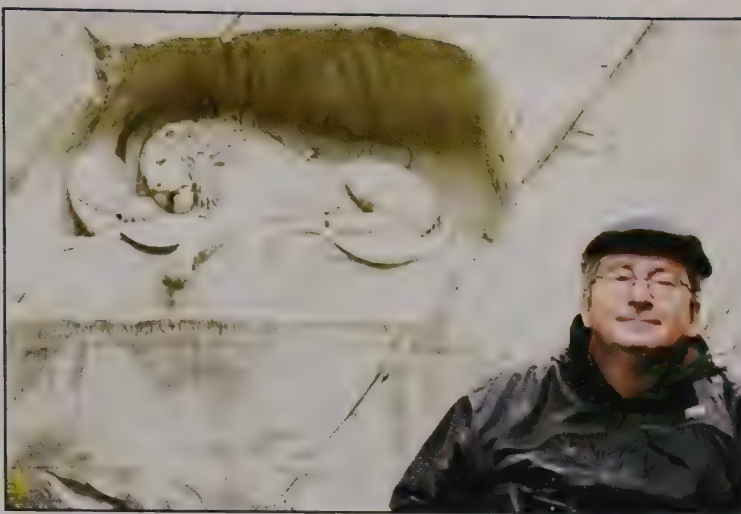
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See the sights: (from left), Kapellbrücke and water tower; Luzern at night; Michael Morgan and the *lowendenkmal*; a steamer setting off across Lake Luzern, and alphorn players on Mt Pilatus.



The history makes this monument a melancholic and strangely moving place to visit.

The best-known image of Luzern is the *Kapellbrücke*, a medieval covered bridge spanning the Reuss River and part of the original city defences. The Swiss did not, as Orson Welles would have us believe, enjoy 500 years of peace and democracy, but were constantly at war with each other, or with the Germans or Austrians. The bridge entrances are stepped, but access is possible by a stair lift, which operates with a Eurokey, obtainable from the tourist information centre in the railway station.

Switzerland has the reputation of being an expensive country, but I found this was not always the case. Three nights in one room (two sharing) in the four-star Hotel Continental Park certainly was £511. Meals and drinks tended to cost more than at home. But there was a substantial disability discount on the boat trips on Lake Luzern. A trip to Brunnen at the furthest edge of the lake, for example, cost £17.60, but wheelchair users went free so you were only paying for your personal assistant.

Temperatures, and I went in late September, are much like home except the nights are a little sharper.

The Swiss use their mountains as a huge, outdoor heritage park; everywhere is accessible. Luzern is an excellent location for the disabled traveller. I'll be going back.

INFORMATION

BA Flights Heathrow to Zurich, £69 each. Easyjet Luton to Zurich, about £65

Train from Zurich to Luzern (train station below airport building) www.rail.ch

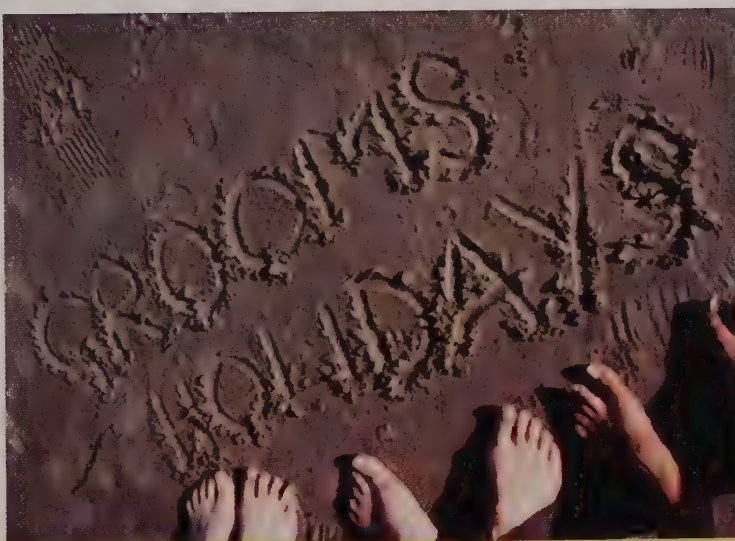
Switzerland Tourism publishes a hotel guide, www.myswitzerland.com

Swiss Hotel Association, www.swisshotels.ch

Mobility International for general info and links: www.mis-ch.ch

Luzern Tourism Board, tel: +41 (0) 41 227 17 17, www.luzern.org produces a leaflet on disability access in the city. Pity it is only in German.

Hotel Continental Park, tel: +41 (0) 41 228 90 50, email: hotel@continental.ch



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Insuring a great trip

Disability shouldn't increase the cost of your travel insurance, but you may still get stung with hidden costs. Philip Barron suggests a few top buys

Many people think that travel insurance policies cost pretty much the same. This is not true – and the difference can amount to pounds of your hard-earned cash. Shop around for the best deal, and be especially aware of travel agencies who stand to reap big commissions from overpriced policies.

The good news is that millions of disabled people can expect to get good cover at the same price as non-disabled people. This is because, unless there are special circumstances, disabled people are no more likely than others to make a claim. Indeed, it could be argued that disabled people are a better risk, as they are likely to be more careful while travelling than the average holidaymaker.

However, you do need to declare any pre-existing medical condition that might affect the risk, as failure to do so could invalidate any claim.

You may not know whether a particular condition matters but you don't have to guess. Most insurers now use a telephone screening line where staff have a list of hundreds of conditions and illnesses, many of which will not affect your premium at all. Some will mean that you either pay more or have a higher "excess" (the amount that is deducted from any payment the insurer makes when you claim).

Typically, you will not be required to ring the screening line if your trip is within the UK or you have only one of the following conditions: high blood pressure (hypertension), gallstones, gout, cataracts, hernia or benign lumps.

You are likely to be referred to the screening service if you have more than one of the above conditions or have been a hospital inpatient (or under the care of a specialist consultant) in the past year. The same applies if you have been referred to a consultant or are waiting to have an operation. The insurer will also want to know if you have ever been treated for a breathing or heart-related condition (including angina) and are still taking medication. For obvious reasons, these rules apply too to anyone on whose health your journey may depend (like a close relative or your carer).

Remember, being referred to the screening line does not necessarily mean you will be turned down or charged extra – holidaymakers who have cancer are covered by some insurers for journeys of short duration.

Discounts

Many insurers give discounts to couples travelling together. If you have an "all risks" household insurance policy that covers personal possessions – including a wheelchair – away from home, you could reduce your travel premium by taking a policy that



Beach ball: but if you're heading to Mallorca, Spain, or somewhere else, shop around for the best deal

Insurance for people under 65

Insurer	1 week, Europe	2 weeks, Europe	2 weeks, worldwide
Direct Travel Insurance	£10.00	£11.00	£24.50*
Insureandgo	£12.18	£14.59	£29.00*
Flexicover Direct (Gold policy)	£18.00	£22.00	£32.00*
Marks and Spencer	£17.09	£19.14	£38.92
Nationwide BS	£17.32	£22.61	£43.16

Insurance for older travellers

Insurer / age band	1 week, Europe	2 weeks, Europe	2 weeks, worldwide
MRL under 69	£19.00	£29.00	£45.00
69-74	£25.00	£35.00	£55.00
75-80	£29.00	£39.00	£69.00
81-89	£35.00	£45.00	£75.00
Age Concern 55-64	£26.60	£34.10	£62.90*
65-69	£28.40	£39.60	£76.30*
70-74	£32.00	£48.50	£85.40*
75-79	£42.00	£53.70	£96.10*
80+ (no limit)	£47.20	£60.00	£105.50*
Marks and Spencer 65+	£34.17	£38.28	£77.83*

* excludes USA

doesn't cover baggage.

A new travel policy covering disability equipment will be available in the New Year from Epping-based J&M Insurance, tel: 01992 566900. Meanwhile, if your wheelchair is not insured away from home, they may be able to arrange temporary cover.

Older travellers

Until recently, there were a number of insurers who did not load their premiums on age grounds. Sadly, insurers found

that retired people take more holidays and their health is more likely to deteriorate unexpectedly, leading to cancellation or curtailment of a trip. High numbers and sizes of claims in recent years have been blamed for steep hikes in premiums for people over 65. Some insurers put premiums up at even lower ages, and have effectively priced themselves out of the so-called grey market. Avoid them – there are others that remain open-minded.

Taking the kids?

If you are travelling as a family group, you may not need to pay for each child separately if you shop around.

Some insurers, such as Direct Travel, offer family cover which includes any number of children under 19 years of age (or 23 if in full-time education). This age range may vary.

With some companies, such as Age Concern Insurance Services (tel: 0845 601 2234), kids go free.

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www.nationwide.co.uk
MRL 0870 870 4401
www.MRLinsurance.co.uk

Age Concern
0845 601 2234
www.ace.org.uk



ALL PHOTOS: MARION BULL

Agent provençal

Marion Bull enjoys a lazy retreat in the rural south of France

It might just be the effects of those free Cartagène tastings, but I only had to walk through the gates of the little town of Sommières to find *joie de vivre* spilling from every sun-dappled café.

In summer, its provençal-style evening market, situated under the plane trees in the tiny medieval square (there's been a weekly market here for 900 years), is one of the delights of the rural south. Strawberries from the woods, bunches of lavender, olive oil soap, liquorice root, hairy sausages – I somehow ended up buying everything.

It was the Romans who first brought grape vines down here. Just outside town, the award-winning vineyard in the grounds of the rustic Domaine de Guyot B&B has vestiges of Roman remains. It isn't wheelchair accessible, due to the age of the property, a former monastery. But it's a fantastic location and worth a visit to their cellar, where you can buy wines direct.

Sommières' grandiose former railway station has been transformed into the elegant and accessible Hôtel de L'Estelou. It's all wrought iron and linen, with a massive reception area. I had breakfast on a light and airy glass-panelled platform, overlooking a swimming pool. Fresh warm croissants didn't need to stand on platform two for long.

Elsewhere in the region, Nîmes, with its Roman arena, is convenient for flights, while Sommières, located just half an hour down the coast, is a good base for exploring the Cévennes and the lovely Gardon valley.

Mass tourism is unheard of though, and you'll need a car and a sense of adventure to explore the Gard area and its many charming, out-of-the-way hamlets, B&Bs and small hotels.

To the north of Nîmes, the brand new Bastide des Pins is a

property is just over a mile from the medieval village of Castillon.

For something rather more hands-on, try the idyllic farm-with-no-name at Massiès, and help milk the goats in the evening. It's great for the kids – on the day I went, two French

'The local beauty is surpassed only by the sense of history and the tolerance and openness of the people'

family run guest house set in beautiful pine trees which are floodlit at night. It lies half a mile from the spectacular Pont du Gard, a 2,000 year old aqueduct. Owners Patricia and Philippe (an ex-disability worker) offer specially adapted, fully accessible rooms and lovely home-cooked food. They have a swimming pool, and there is a small beach nearby on the Gardon river. The

children with a combined age of 12 and a bucketful, left me feeling like a hopeless failure – no one told me you should squeeze instead of pull.

The goats are all known by name, and Parisians have been known to drive down just for the farm's gold-medal Pélardon cheese.

The tiny hamlet of Massiès overlooks chestnut hills and stone terraces – a landscape



Rural retreat: (left) the farm-with-no-name at Massiès; (above) pots in Anduze; and (below) baskets at the market



that hasn't changed for centuries. Accommodation is not fully accessible – modernised ground floor rooms have some steps.

At nearby St Jean du Gard, I rattled through the Gardon valley on the little steam train. En route, you cross 20 viaducts before reaching the dramatic rocky setting of Anduze, a pottery and antiques centre. Part way along the railway is Générargues, where the biggest bamboo garden this side of Asia boasts hibiscus the size of

Info

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Relais de l'Estelou
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Tel: (00 33) 466 777 108
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Bambouseraie Prafrance
Générargues
www.bambouseraie.fr

dinner plates, lotus blossom, and black bamboo that almost moves skywards as you watch – it's said to grow a metre a day.

On the way back to Massiès, I stopped for dinner at the hamlet of Pausan, near where the Huguenots hid during the religious wars. The local beauty is surpassed only by the sense of history and the tolerance and openness of the people. You won't leave disappointed – this is a wonderful part of the world

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World wise web

You can save hours by getting online before getting away. Lucy Howard tips her top sites

Rough Guides have launched intouch, a new all-in-one software package for planning your trip and staying in touch with people back home before, during and after your holiday. Create an itinerary and budget using on-screen information and maps, and take advantage of the diary to keep family and friends informed of your whereabouts. The diary can also be linked to your mobile phone so that if you send a text message, intouch will automatically send an email or sms to those listed on your account. You can also post photos and diary entries online and then download them to make a journal on your return. www.roughguidesintouch.com



RADAR has launched an online version of its holiday guide. Offering information on accommodation in England and Ireland, the online search engine allows travellers to check the accessibility of a destination before leaving. www.radarsearch.org

For detailed access information to restaurants, hotels, theatres, cinemas and more in cities around the UK, including Cardiff, Edinburgh and Brighton, point your mouse at www.disabledgo.com. Hundreds of venues are listed.

Other links:

- www.holidaycare.org.uk – advice and information on for independent holidaymakers
- www.youareable.com – popular travel forum where users can exchange ideas and share their experiences
- www.spinal.co.uk – advice on travel for people with spinal injuries. Includes a special section on children's holidays
- www.canbedone.co.uk – travel agent and tour operator offering holidays to popular destinations in Europe

If you are tempted by the exotic destinations on the Holiday programme, check out the BBC's website at www.bbc.co.uk/holiday. There is a section for disabled travellers, offering advice, tips and information on all aspects of your holiday, including the latest on the Disability Discrimination Act and the rights of the disabled traveller. You can also read the travel experiences of celebrities like BBC star Lara Masters (below), who reports from Arizona.



The Winged Fellowship Trust, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, gives disabled people and their families and carers help, advice and breaks. The trust offers holidays and supportive services for carers, as well as opportunities for volunteers. There are subsidised breaks at five accessible holiday centres around the UK, including entertainment and excursions, and 24-hour care in some centres. They also offer tailor-made holidays for visually impaired people, with sighted guides. www.wft.org.uk



The Youth Hostel Association's (YHA) accessible website offers information about hostels and sightseeing for the budget traveller in the UK and abroad. Many hostels have wheelchair access, typetalk and facilities for assistance dogs. YHA and Cumbria Tourist board have recently bought a new fully wheelchair accessible shuttle bus (above), which connects visitors to hostels in the Lake District with Windermere station. www.lakespartnership.co.uk www.yha.org.uk

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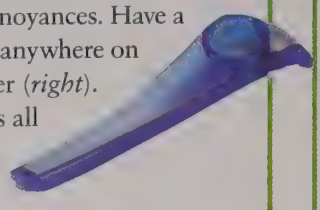
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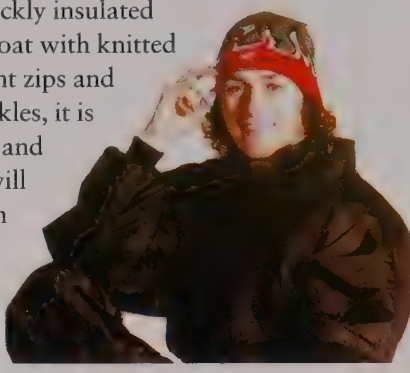
Everything... and the kitchen sink

From lightweight wheelchairs to easy-to-feel dominos, Lucy Howard has a gadget idea for every holiday

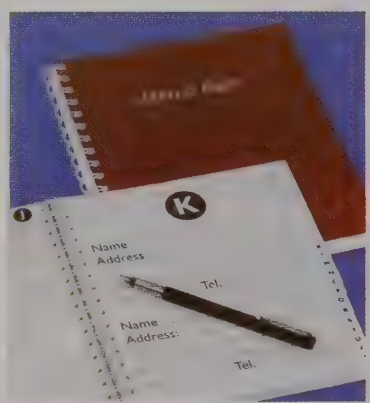
- Senior Selections offer many ingenious solutions to common travel annoyances. Have a drink or a bite to eat anytime, anywhere on the move with the Magi Opener (*right*). This simple device easily opens all types of ring pull cans. £4.
- Get your walking boots on and off quickly and easily with elastic laces. Designed to take the hassle out of the beginning and end of your journey, leaving you to worry about tackling those hills. Available in black or brown. £3.
- Keep comfortable on a long journey with a wheelchair cushion. This thickly padded cushion is made from durable fire retardant materials and will fit any style of seat. From £12.76.
- Take everything you need on a day out with the help of this handy wheelchair pack. It has loops to attach it to the handles of wheelchairs of all shapes and sizes, and different-sized zip pockets for ease of access. Made from waterproof nylon. From £12.80.
- Travel light with the lightweight transit wheelchair, which allows for easy transportation and storage when travelling on buses, trains and planes. It has a strong aluminium frame and comes with all-terrain wheels, easy-to-use high-tension brakes and adjustable foot rests. The wheelchair folds into a convenient carry case. From £297.87. All these products are available from Senior Selections, tel: 01305 848 725, email: sales@cdselections.com



- If you find it hard to find clothes suitable for taking on holiday, check out the latest range from Wearable. A bestseller is the subs suit (*below*), which will prepare you for the worst of weathers. Featuring a thickly insulated showerproof coat with knitted cuffs, long front zips and stud-closed ankles, it is easy to put on and take off, and will keep you warm and dry. Sizes from small to extra large. £45.
- Flight socks will help improve your circulation while you are sitting for long periods on the plane. So instead of worrying about deep vein thrombosis when you are jetting off to sunnier climes, you can dream of your destination instead. Sizes from 4 to 13. Ecru or Black. £9.95.
- If you find it difficult to power your wheelchair on a long trip, try out the range of gloves that are designed specifically for wheelchair users. These include the leather power gloves, which have an easy velcro fastening and Dycem palms for maximum grip. Dark green. Sizes from small to extra large. All these products are available from Wearable, tel: 0141 774 9000, email: orders@wearableclothing.com, www.wearableclothing.com



- Get out and about more easily with the folding walking stick from Ways and Means (*right*). Quick and simple to use, the stick has a comfortable hand grip, snaps open and conveniently folds away into a plastic pouch. From £21.23. Tel: 0845 606 0911.
- Pass the time on a long journey with a domino set from the RNIB. These easy to see and feel dominoes are made from plastic and have raised black dots on a white background. They come in an easily transportable plastic case. From £5.99. Also from the RNIB is a large print address book (*left*) to allow you to keep in touch with people back home. £5.25. Tel: 0845 702 3153, or shop online at: <http://onlineshop.rnib.org.uk>
- Take everything you need with you by storing your mobility scooter in a trailer from Erde. These trailers are especially designed to transport scooters behind vehicles and are available with a range of accessories. Made from galvanised steel, with rear lights and mudguards. From £1080.97. Tel: Wilstow on 01284 852006.



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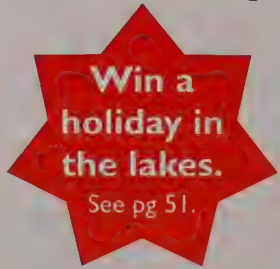
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Word games

Language matters – as *The Sun* discovered after running its ‘Bonkers Bruno’ front page. Rod Hermeston sorts his impairments from his handicaps to offer an overview of the minefield that is disability language

When *The Sun* carried the recent headline “Bonkers Bruno Locked Up”, public reaction showed the paper had overstepped the mark. Amid a surge of complaints, the paper changed its headline to “Sad Bruno in Mental Home”.

Former world boxing champion, Frank Bruno, had been admitted to a psychiatric unit because of depression. The rapid change in editorial policy showed the public can see the potential of language to hurt.

Susannah Strong, head of media relations at the charity Mind, says: “What would really make a difference is for *The Sun* to have some kind of editorial policy where they do not use words like ‘bonkers’.”

What would really make a difference is for *The Sun* to have some kind of editorial policy where they do not use words like ‘bonkers’

Disability groups have been calling for changes in the way language is used by the media and society in relation to disabled people for many years. But why?

It is clear that words like “mongol”, or “spastic”, shouted across a street are intended to hurt, and do so. But disability campaigners also object to phrases like “suffers from”, “wheelchair bound” and “afflicted with”, because such language medicalises a disability and suggests the problem lies with helpless individuals. Given that the social model of disability says that it is society which causes disability through discrimination, this kind of language lets society off the hook, and helps it to continue discriminating against disabled people, campaigners argue. Meanwhile, phrases like “the blind” or “an arthritic” group disabled people together and dehumanise them, they say.

Colin Barnes, professor of disability studies at Leeds University is convinced that media language plays a pivotal role in shaping social attitudes about disabled people.

And before we get too excited at *The Sun* changing a headline, we should remember the findings of the Scope report *Stop*

Press published in 2000. Over an eight week period it recorded the use by newspapers of various words. “Sufferer” was used 45 times, “handicap” 35, “cripple” 20 and “wheelchair bound/confined” 12.

Barnes points out that appropriate language has been available since the mid-1980s but says that papers just “don’t care”. True, *The Guardian* style guide urges its journalists to avoid terms such as those listed above. It recognises that acceptable terms include “wheelchair user”, “disabled people”, “blind people” or “deaf people”. However, a quick search of its website reveals the use of the phrase “a multiple sclerosis sufferer” in a recent story about cannabis.

this and in the second edition of the dictionary, released in August this year, the phrasing was changed to “a person with cerebral palsy”.

Angus Stevenson, project manager for English dictionaries at Oxford University Press (OUP), which publishes the dictionary, believes the *DN* article helped alert OUP to the fact that the phrase “suffering from” is a loaded term. This will be taken into account during updates of future dictionaries, including the highly popular *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, he says.

He adds: “We constantly monitor language via our databases and in our private lives to ensure that our definitions and usage notes reflect the latest thinking in sensitive issues.”

It is not just in the media and dictionaries where language matters. Manchester City Council’s website includes a section on disability and language for the benefit of staff and the public. The guidance was reviewed by the council’s Access Review Forum, made up of disabled people’s organisations.

Jackie Driver, service improvement and inclusion officer at the council says this is about “using wording and language which disabled people and their organisations find acceptable”.

So how far should we go and how much does it matter? For instance, is it important to say “disabled people” rather than “people with disabilities”? Notice that the latter makes disability an individual issue rather than a socially imposed one.

Colin Barnes is adamant that the phrase needs to be “disabled people”.

“The distinction between impairment and disability is fundamental. ‘People with disabilities’, although it may be a popular term, just perpetuates that ambiguity,” he says.

But Tom Shakespeare, a sociologist at the University of Newcastle, says: “It seems to me that there are lots of people who don’t know the right words who are nevertheless respectful of disabled people’s rights, and



there are people who do know the right words who are not. So I don’t think you can read peoples’ attitudes from the words they use.”

But, he says, “there is plainly offensive language which we can all agree on”, adding that it is also important to call people what they wish to be called.

Margie Woodward, campaigns officer at Scope, says: “Whatever political correctness does or doesn’t do, it makes you reflect on your attitudes. It is worth pursuing

so long as you can put up an argument as to why this is so important.”

So there is disagreement among disability campaigners about the precise importance of language.

But if disabled people dislike certain terminology, they surely have a right to challenge it, and it is clear that, however slow the process, society can, over time, be persuaded to mind its language.

Rod Hermeston is former News Editor of *DN*.

Word count

Occurrences of offensive terms in newspapers over an eight week period

	national	local
Handicap	35	34
The disabled	26	43
Cripple	20	5
Wheelchair bound	12	25
Victim	10	8
Sufferer	45	85
Normal	8	3
Abnormal	4	0
Retarded	1	0
Walking miracle	1	0
Deformity	8	3
Genetically unacceptable	2	0
Psychos	2	0
Freak	10	0
Body of a Holocaust victim	2	0

Words relating to disability identified in national and local newspapers by the Scope *Stop Press!* report, over an eight week period starting on 7 June, 1999.

"Not just a Wheelchair"

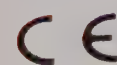
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Chris Bantin, who has spina bifida, became the British disabled weightlifting champion at the age of 16. He went on to compete in the 1988 and 1992 Paralympics, before a serious injury ended his powerlifting career. He is now a fitness instructor based in Crowthorne, Berkshire

When I first started work in 1985, I got a job as an office administrator, because it was considered safe employment for a disabled person at the time.

It was not until 1994, when I was considering retiring from powerlifting because of injury, that the gym manager at my local sports centre told me I ought to use my spare time to qualify as an instructor. At first I thought he was joking, but six months later he was still on at me to get qualified.

One day, he told me a guy was coming to the centre to run a gym instructor qualification course. He said if I didn't book a place, he would book me on the course himself. So I did.

I enjoyed the challenge and the instructor was so impressed with how well I mixed with people that he asked me to help run one of his courses. I enjoy meeting people and am often told that I have good social skills.

The gym instructor qualification allowed me to



take inductions, where clients are shown how to use equipment and are given their own training schedules.

I was turned down for a couple of part-time jobs, by people who didn't seem to want a wheelchair user working in their gym, but I soon secured my first job, as a weekend fitness instructor at Farnborough Recreation Centre, doing inductions and designing programmes for clients.

The only problem I ever had with a client was with a big bodybuilder who, when he saw me, said: "What are you going

to be able to effing teach me?" But once he realised I knew what I was talking about, he was as nice as pie.

The gym then asked me if I would work at another centre they ran, for three evenings a week. This time I would be working on my own. I jumped at the chance, even though it meant doing that as well as my day job.

In 2000, I took voluntary redundancy. I knew what I wanted to do with my life, so I put some of my redundancy money into a Premier Diploma. This was a three month, full-time course, which covered gym instruction, nutrition, circuit training, fitness testing, massage, sports therapy, sports massage and working with groups such as disabled people and pregnant women.

I qualified in October 2000, although this was not without its problems and difficulties, as I had to find different ways of doing some of the sports therapy techniques.

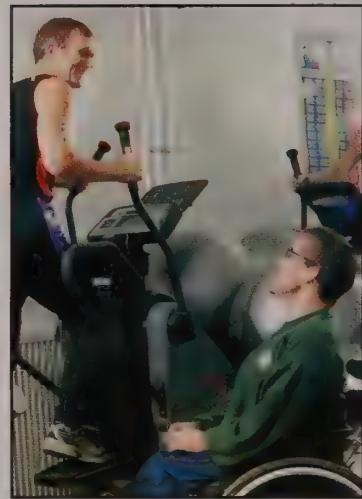
Once I qualified, I began applying for jobs as a fitness instructor. I was successful with my second application and got a job working in a big sports centre for Bracknell Forest Borough Council. Again, I was doing inductions, fitness tests and programme designs, as well as cleaning and everyday maintenance around the gym. There are some things I can't do, like carrying buckets of water upstairs to do the cleaning, but I just get somebody else to do them and I do jobs for them in return.

After working there for two years, I was told about a vacancy with the same council in the Edgbarrow Sports Centre. This gym had dual use equipment, where disabled and

PICTURES: WATERSIDE STUDIO



Weighty matters: Chris at work in the Edgbarrow Sports Centre



non-disabled people could train together.

I applied and got the job. As well as doing the usual inductions, fitness tests and programme designs, I also run circuit classes and a fitness programme for kids.

'The only problem I have ever had with a client was with a big bodybuilder who, when he saw me, said: "What are you going to be able to effing teach me?"'

Now I am hoping to apply for a job to train staff in sports centres about disability awareness.

I have found working with other disabled people both challenging and rewarding. We have only had two or three here but as more gyms become accessible, more disabled people are starting to use them.

I have also become qualified for GP referrals. This means I can look after people with conditions such as severe asthma, diabetes, heart problems (once they have been cleared to exercise by their doctor) and severe obesity.

The fitter you are, the longer you will live. Regular exercise also increases your muscle tone and strength and improves your self-esteem. Disabled people should be just as concerned about their personal fitness as non-disabled people.

I am not one to sit and mope around and I can't stand people who do. I have always been brought up with a positive attitude. I have had a few setbacks, but on the whole I am pleased with the way my career has developed. When problems have arisen, I have always worked around them. It has just been a question of adapting.

● To find out about fitness training or how to become a fitness instructor, telephone Chris on 01344 776211 or 07712 777499 or email him at chris.bantin@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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TV



Agoraphobia is flavour of the month: BBC1's *ONE Life: Scared to Leave Home*, ITV1's *The Test* and C4's *Animated Minds* (7.55pm slot) all dealt with this troubling condition.

Trouble aplenty (and vast expense) was caused by the controversial visit of "Dubya" Bush to our shores. In the vanguard of the anti-war protest was Ron Kovic, the wheelchair-using Vietnam Veteran and inspiration for the film *Born In The USA*.

Talking of vanguards, Five is pioneering audio description on digital satellite. Well done Five. I take it all back.

EtCetera, the Northern Disability Arts Forum newsletter, urged us to watch C4's *Orphans*, a "hilarious black comedy" featuring a central character with cp who uses a powerchair.

Clearly I'm not on the right drugs to appreciate it – I found it deeply disturbing and desperately unfunny.

Can you remember where you were when you heard JFK say he'd "rather die than go around on crutches"? BBC2's *Secrets of Leadership* revealed that the president, like predecessor Franklin D Roosevelt, went to great lengths to conceal his disability.

It's not always possible, of course, to conceal a stammer, particularly if yours is accompanied by involuntary movements like DJ Steve. A residential course dramatically improved his stammer in BBC1's *Lost For Words* – good news for the UK's half million stammerers.

Babygrow-wearing Matt Lucas (scoremaster on BBC2's *Shooting Stars*) gives me the heebie-jeebies, but his alter ego, Andy in *Little Britain*, also on BBC2, is very clever. Andy gets pushed around in his wheelchair and likes to be waited on hand and foot but actually has no problem walking. Will someone peel me a grape please?

And finally, BBC1's *Watchdog* alerted scooter users to suppliers Mobility Network and Discount Scooters who are allegedly selling unsuitable products to vulnerable people and breaching contract by not doing repairs. You have been warned.

Jane Shepherd

Theatre



Sweet Panic



In *Sweet Panic*, Stephen Poliakoff presents an unusual and adventurous examination of psychology and the breakdown of lives under the pressures of modern living.

The journeys of the characters are underpinned by a desperate need to find sense in the world around them. Each of them, from the market researcher to the problem child, attempts to discover "why we do what we do". As they attempt this, order and structure are replaced with confusion and conflict.

The premise of a controlled and controlling society is laid

bare as the authorities – governmental, social, welfare, advertising, and business agents – are exposed. What becomes clear as the play progresses is that the notion of a controlled and comfortable society is inherently false; confusion, rebellion and fear run deep. At the heart of progress lies an empty and dangerous consumerism.

All the performances are polished. The central conflict between child psychologist Clare, played by Victoria Hamilton, and her client Mrs Trevel, played by Jane Horrocks (*above right*), is gripping, and shows to good effect their considerable talents. As the stakes are raised, and their struggle for power intensifies, the actors come into their own.



Hamilton's calm, professional analyst is reduced to a gibbering wreck as her own demons and insecurities are exposed by the obsessive attentions of Mrs Trevel.

This is a dark comedy which

holds back; the darkness could be darker, and the comedy could be funnier. Complex themes and concerns are given the West End treatment, while the real life struggles are glossed over. It will be interesting to see whether the film of *Sweet Panic* – currently being filmed with the same actors – delves further into the characters' professional and personal traumas.

Despite the ambition of *Sweet Panic*, I couldn't help thinking that some of the themes touched on could have been delved into more thoroughly. It's an interesting and entertaining play, but its delivery doesn't quite fulfil expectations.

Jamie Beddard

• *Duke of York's theatre, until 7 February, tel: 020 7369 1791*

Film



Sylvia



Christine Jeffs' film is a biopic about the relationship between the American poet Sylvia Plath (Gwyneth Paltrow) and her husband Ted Hughes (Daniel Craig), *pictured right*. They met at Cambridge, where Hughes was already a rising star in the poetry world, and fell in love. Their marriage was overshadowed by his infidelity and her depression, which led eventually to her

suicide at the age of 30.

There's little to please Plath's more violently feminist fans, who tend to see Hughes as an oppressor who drove their idol to her grave. Instead, it's an even-handed portrayal of two strong-minded, extremely talented but fallible human beings.

And yet, it's peculiarly uninformative. It shows the events, but doesn't involve us emotionally. The film, a BBC production, has many of the qualities of a Sunday night costume drama – unchallenging pap for the kind of people who read biographies of Virginia Woolf but have never opened



her novels. Its biggest crime is that it doesn't trust the poetry: there's endless talk about poetry, and how Hughes' career overshadowed hers for so long, but it never really foregrounds the words.

It looks as good as you'd expect, with lots of period

recreations of the fifties and sixties, plus a nice jazz soundtrack. But if you want emotional insight into this relationship, read Hughes' *Birthday Letters*, much better value for eight quid than a cinema ticket for *Sylvia*.

Allan Sutherland

Coming up



Oily Cart and Carousel Players theatre companies are touring with *Baking Time*, by Tim Webb, a show especially for kids. Two playful bakers, Bap and Bun (*right*), along with dough characters, battle through flour snowstorms and beat out rhythms – all while baking a loaf of bread. You can even eat it afterwards.

• *For three to six year olds. 10 January, Half Moon theatre, Tower Hamlets, London, tel: 020 7709 8900, then nationwide. Oily Cart, tel: 020 8672 6329, www.oilycart.org.uk*



The Victoria and Albert museum is holding introductory "talk and touch" tours in their recently opened art gallery. The talks will describe the paintings and allow visitors to touch objects relating to the exhibitions. • *For visually impaired visitors, 14 January, 2pm. For deaf visitors, 28*



January 6.30pm. Free. Introductory tours available on tape, in large print or Braille. Tel: 020 7942 2211, textphone 020 7942 2002, www.vam.ac.uk.



CandoCo Dance Company, which integrates disabled and non-disabled performers, is touring the UK with a double bill from January. *Microphobia* is a blend of dance theatre, music and language. It transports the audience from an airport security check to an Olympic stadium. *The Human Suite* features sculptural movement and dance sequences.

• *24 January, Riley Theatre, Leeds, then nationwide, tel: 020 7704 6845, www.candoco.co.uk*

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Write on

In the first of a new series, Carrie Webster, who has cp, talks about her passion – writing short stories

I have always been a creative person and in my spare time I like to write. I write poetry, articles and reviews, but I mainly write short stories. I also play the piano and used to draw and paint, too, but feel that writing is what I do best. I like turning my imagination into words, and when I do a piece of writing, I get a real sense of achievement.

I first realised I liked writing when I was 13 years old and wrote my first poem. One of my favourite subjects at school and college was English language. I would always come up with great ideas for stories and essays. It was the only time that I did and enjoyed doing my homework.

After leaving school in 1992, I used to write poetry and song lyrics as a hobby. I didn't think about doing any other form of writing until two-and-a-half years ago, when I decided to do an Introduction to Journalism course in Leytonstone.

I had no real desire to become a journalist, even though I was interested in

journalism and how you write for newspapers and magazines. At the end of the course, everyone had to write an article for a local magazine. I wrote an article about how you do not see disabled people in mainstream media. I was the only disabled person on the course and it was a great opportunity to write about something I feel passionate about.

Some day, I hope to do some writing for TV. I love *EastEnders* and have watched it for 18 years, but they haven't done anything about physical disability in that time, which bothers me. The media reflects society and many programmes reflect – or are supposed to reflect – society. Soaps are the kind of shows that should reflect the society that we, the public, live in. Soaps are some of the most popular programmes that people watch on television but they never really have any portrayal of disabled people.

On the rare occasions when a soap has decided to use a character who is disabled, it is



most likely a negative stereotype of someone who is bitter and twisted and has a chip on his or her shoulder.

Hopefully, the media portrayal of disabled people will become more positive in the near future. I want to see more disabled actors and actresses playing characters in *EastEnders* and I want to see

studying, I reviewed *Loverboy* by Mariah Carey and *Little L* by Jamiroquai for the course magazine. I learnt so much about journalism by doing the course. It was great fun.

A few months after the course, someone I knew read my reviews in the course magazine and said they thought they were really good and that I

liked my style of writing, which gave me confidence. When you write something, it comes from within you. It's personal. You are not sure if other people will like it. Afterwards, when they said they did, I thought, "Yes, I'm good at doing something. I'm good at writing." I don't think I'm the best writer in the world, but I'm glad they enjoyed it.

I mostly get my inspiration from everyday life. A person, or an event that has happened, can inspire me to write. I get ideas for stories while I am out and about, doing my shopping, in a café having a coffee or while on the bus or train, so it's always best to carry a notepad around to write down any ideas. I also get inspiration or ideas for my writing at night. For some reason, my imagination and creativity come alive at night. This is common for many writers, musicians and artists that I know.

Sometimes it takes me a day to write a short story, sometimes a week. I either write or type on my computer depending on how I feel.

My advice to any new writers is to join a writing course or a writing group. Not only will you gain experience in your writing, you will also have people to encourage you and give you confidence in your writing ability. Also, I would recommend you write something at least every day, even if it is very small, as it will help you to develop your writing technique.

● *Writers magazine:* www.writersservices.co.uk/wsmag/ includes advice and tips for writing and publishing your own work.

● www.wordup.co.uk and www.writersnews.co.uk cover courses and review books that have been written to help writers. Both also have online forums to share ideas and tips.

● www.mystworld.com/young-writer/ is the website for Young Writer magazine.

'I mostly get my inspiration from everyday life. A person, or an event that has happened, can inspire me to write'

more disabled presenters presenting mainstream programmes such as *Blue Peter* and *T4*. Disabled people are part of society: the media should reflect that.

I also love music and, while

had a skill for writing.

After doing the course, I decided to write a review for a Fun Lovin' Criminals gig that I went to in London. I emailed the review to a Fun Lovin' Criminals unofficial website, and the next day it was on the website. I couldn't believe that a piece of writing I had written was there for everyone to see. I was so pleased.

In September this year, I decided to do a 12-week short story class at Mary Ward College in Holborn. I hadn't written a story in about ten years and really wanted to get back into the kind of writing I used to do at school.

At first, I was anxious about writing stories and reading them out in class, because I had never done that before and some people were far more experienced than me.

The first story I wrote was about a woman who thought she was pregnant. Before I gave it to my teacher, my brother read it and said he really liked it, which made me feel more confident. But I was still nervous about the thought of reading it out in class; so nervous that I asked my teacher to read it. It would probably have been alright for me to do it, as all of them understand me, but I wanted to make sure the class could hear the story. I think it was more to do with nerves. The teacher was fine about it.

After my teacher read it out, lots of people told me they



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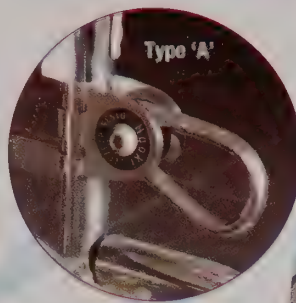
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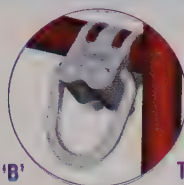
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Pray for me – I'm a disabled mum

In the enlightened 21st century, you would have hoped a disabled mother wouldn't have raised too many eyebrows. Mum of two Reesha Armstead hoped so too – until a passer-by knelt before her in the street and began praying

Having been disabled all my life, I am well accustomed to people reacting to me in different ways. I get stared at in my wheelchair every time I go anywhere; I have the telephone put down on me frequently when I answer it in my own home because people can't deal with my speech impediment; I have been patted on the head; had 10p put in my hand by a passer-by, and once someone got down on their knees and prayed for me aloud in the middle of the street.

From the very first moment that we discovered I was pregnant, my non-disabled husband, Ian, and I encountered a whole new set of attitudes from people which still surprise me and stay with me as I experience motherhood.

It began with my first pregnancy. We were over the moon at the prospect of being parents, but hardly anyone

congratulated us or celebrated our news. We kept much of our excitement to ourselves because that seemed safest. (In my work as a volunteer for Disabled Parents Network, whenever I speak to disabled parents-to-be, I make a point of congratulating them, as I remember how rare this was for me).

People asked how on earth we would cope, how was I going to have "it" and how I'd got pregnant in the first place. Our honest answers were simple. We didn't actually know yet how we

tiny bundle of love and coming to terms with not being able to do much for her myself. I'd never considered that some of the so-called professionals I encountered during my pregnancy and after could have been so negative at such a special time in my life.

The one thing I was absolutely determined to do was breastfeed Ria, because that was one thing that only I could do. This was in spite of one midwife in hospital who wanted to give her a bottle

'People asked how on earth we would cope, how was I going to have "it" and how I'd got pregnant in the first place'

would cope but we would. I would probably have "my baby" by giving birth and I'd become pregnant through the infamous joy of sex.

All went well with my pregnancy and in July 1996, Ria Isabella was born. It wasn't easy at first, getting used to this

because that would be "easier" for her, yet thanks to another midwife who spent three hours with me at home helping me find comfortable ways of feeding, both in my wheelchair and out of it. I went on to breastfeed for a year.

At my post-natal check, I was



A different kind of mum: Reesha with Lenna

not asked once how I was, but instead was bombarded with questions about contraception and then told, "Better still, go and see a gynaecologist". Why? "Because we don't want this happening again, now do we?" Suffice to say, I changed my GP and had my second daughter, Lenna May, in April 2002.

When I discussed with social workers the support I would need in terms of caring for my child, they offered to take her away from me to a family centre for ten hours a day. The social worker who suggested this was promptly asked to leave and I went on to fight and win a long battle to obtain 24-hour personal assistance to enable me to parent.

I had a baby carrier which attached to my wheelchair when we went out. People

would come up to me, coo over my baby and then turn to my personal assistant and tell her what a beautiful baby she had! We'd have to explain that, actually, she was mine.

So, how do I cope with all of this? Just as children go through many and various stages of development, so do we as parents. This is what Ian and I are learning as we travel together on our journey bringing up our two daughters. Lenna is a loveable but cheeky toddler; her latest trick is climbing on my chair to be rewarded by cuddles and fun-rides.

With Ria, now seven years old, we're entering a new phase in our little girl's life. She came home from school upset one day because another child had told her that I was not her mum and couldn't possibly be. Ria had been told she was mistaken about her real mum. Apparently it couldn't be me because I'm in a wheelchair and I talk funny. She has total faith in me and until now, unquestioning adoration. Suddenly, she's realising I'm a different kind of mum and I'm doing my best to prepare her for the nonsensical world in which we live.

I have confidence in myself as an individual and as a mother. I am loved by my husband and those that matter. Both girls seek my love and comfort when they are ill or upset and it is my honour to be the best mum I can for them.

But for the most part I look up at the sky, shake my head, despair and try to laugh.
• Disabled Parents Network is a national organisation of disabled parents that believe disabled people have the right to have children and that they should be properly supported to carry out that right at each stage of parenting.
• Tel: 0870 241 0450, www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk

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Researching direct payments

Direct payments could be set to revolutionise the way support services are provided to disabled people. Instead of receiving services directly from their local council, disabled people can choose to receive the cash equivalent. Disabled people can buy in and tailor their support package to suit their own needs.

From April 2003, the government has made it compulsory for all local authorities to offer direct payments to eligible individuals.

Direct payments offer the potential for disabled people to exercise greater freedom and control over their lives. Instead of the local council telling disabled people which services they will (and won't) provide, disabled people and parents of disabled children decide for themselves who to employ as personal assistants, which services they need and when they want to receive them.

What advantages and disadvantages have disabled people encountered in accessing and managing direct payments? What are the scheme's weaknesses and strengths? Scope has completed a research study which asked disabled adults, young disabled people and parents of disabled children about their experiences of direct payments. Focusing on in-depth interviews with people using direct payments, and with people whose applications for

the scheme had been refused, the study found a lot of positive experiences but also some drawbacks.

Applying for direct payments

Most people learned about the scheme from Social Services staff. Others were told about direct payments by voluntary organisations or found out through the Internet. In some cases, social workers' lack of knowledge about direct payments (or even hostility towards the scheme) posed a major barrier to disabled people receiving direct payments.

Asked why they opted for direct payments, respondents said having a bigger say about their support package was a major consideration. Being able to choose their own personal assistant was seen as particularly important by all respondents. Another reason

many interviewees applied for direct payments was that services provided by the council were inadequate or even unavailable. This is a cause for concern. Disabled people should have the right to choose between direct payments or continuing to receive services from their local council. If council services are so poor that disabled people have no realistic option other than to apply for direct payments, this amounts to no choice at all.

Interviewees also criticised the convoluted bureaucratic processes and lengthy negotiations they had to go through before they received a decision on their application.

Managing direct payments

Respondents were asked how they managed direct payments. The scheme involves disabled people and parents of disabled children taking on a wide range of responsibilities as employers

such as dealing with contracts, tax payments and holiday entitlement. For many respondents these challenges were substantial.

Respondents highlighted their need for training in employment law, contracts, job descriptions, disciplinary processes and so on. Lack of training for personal assistants in working with disabled people was also raised. There is little evidence that structured training exists to support people claiming direct payments or to help them arrange suitable training for personal assistants.

Respondents pointed to a lack of suitable support to underpin the system. Many people had experienced delays in social services departments making direct payments. Internal procedures in many local authorities hindered the efficient management of the scheme.

The impact of direct payments

For a significant number of respondents direct payments met their support needs. For some people, however, their social services assessment did not adequately reflect the level of support they needed so direct payments did not fully meet their needs. Most

interviewees appeared to have greater continuity of care with direct payments than they might have expected previously through local authority provision.

One person felt that the distress caused by the process of trying to access direct payments had continued for a long time after they were put in place. Another noted the difference that having greater choice and control had made to their life but commented that it was a shame that direct payments had had to be developed for this to be achieved.

Conclusion

Although it's still early days, the direct payments scheme can be judged a success in many crucial aspects. Many disabled people have been empowered to exercise more control and flexibility over their lives. It's clear, however, that if the scheme is to expand and develop, local authorities must address the problems of inertia and lack of support which exist in all too many social services departments. Nor must direct payments be seen as an alternative to local authorities providing high-quality, efficient services for those disabled people who want to continue to receive services directly from their local councils.

Contacts

For information about Scope's research into direct payments, contact Kate McMullen, Policy and Research Officer, Scope, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW. Tel: 020 7619 7258 Email: kate.mcmullen@scope.org.uk

You can download an executive summary of the research from www.scope.org.uk

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Fiona with Lizzie, her direct payments personal assistant.

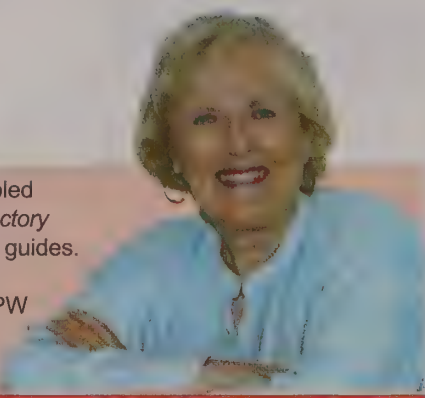


ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS

Dear Ann

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

Ann Darnbrough, who is disabled herself, is co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People* and other guides. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or email your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



New PA for new home

I am thinking of moving house because I am having difficulty in finding suitable home care personal assistants (PAs). I would like to be in some sort of housing community, where I own my home but share a common community centre, PAs and transport.

Susan, Tamworth

Looking for accommodation is always difficult. I have been in touch with the National Association of Estate Agents, which has a Homelink service. This offers a free referral service to anyone wishing to buy, sell, rent or let a property in another town or district. Any special needs can be mentioned in the referral.

If you are having difficulty with PAs, you could contact the National Centre for Independent Living.

● *Homelink*, Arbon House, 21 Jury Street, Warwick CV34 4EH, tel: 01926 417792, email: mail@naeahomelink.co.uk

● *National Centre for Independent Living*, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5RD, tel: 020 7587 1663

Why no hoists?

I have been severely disabled for 15 years and as a road traveller I often get frustrated by the lack of facilities to help me get around. I use a hoist, but not one motorway service area provides access to a hoist, so I have to use pads, which I find unpleasant. Even hotels which advertise facilities for disabled people do not have hoists.

Beryl, Burnley

I have spoken with a contact at the Department for Transport, who says that among the reasons for lack of hoists are issues of safety and security. She said it would be almost impossible to guarantee the safety of travellers using hoists, and that security of hoists would also be a problem – they would be here today, and gone tomorrow.

The Disability Rights Commission is looking at defining the word “reasonable”, which crops up in the Disability Discrimination Act. If they do so, it may have implications for the provision of hoists.

Shop obstruction

I have been trying to get officials to contact a local newsagent's shop and ask them to remove display stands that obstruct the entrance for white cane users and wheelchair users. I have written to the town hall and my local paper, but have received no reply from either.

Helen, Lancashire

When you have a problem like this, it can be a good idea to get other local people on your side – numbers matter. Are you in touch with a local organisation for people with visual impairment, perhaps connected with the RNIB? Enquire at your library for the nearest branch.

You should also contact the Disability Rights Commission helpline. They are there to help resolve exactly this kind of problem, and will be able to advise you of your rights.

● *DRC helpline*: 08457 622 633, www.drc-gb.org/whatwedo/enquirydiscriminate.asp

New limbs

My husband is a chronic diabetic and has lost both his legs. I would like to know if you have any names and addresses of professors who would be able to get him limbs. Although he is only 50, he has been told by Inverness Hospital that they cannot do anything for him.

Rose, Inverness

I am sorry to hear your husband is having difficulties obtaining suitable limbs. Although I do not have any contact with appropriate professors, I suggest you contact the Murray Foundation. They offer a support and counselling service for amputees and their families in Scotland.

You might also get in touch with the Limbless Association, which provides information, advice and support for people of all ages in the UK who are without one or more limbs.

● *Limbless Association*, Rehabilitation Centre,

tel: 020 8788 1777,

www.limbless-association.org

● *The Murray Foundation*, tel: 0141 580 8564

New support group

I am setting up an online group for those affected by DiGeorge Syndrome or VCFS (or any 22Q deletions). DiGeorge is a genetic disorder causing a range of disabilities among children and adults.

The purpose of the group will be to communicate with other families, to share news, photos, problems and advice, and hopefully to have some fun.

Anyone who would like to join the group should contact me at carolannknox@hotmail.com

Carol, by email

I wonder if you are in touch with Max Appeal, which provides support for all forms of 22q11 deletions – including DiGeorge. They have information on various groups. You might also get in touch

with Contact a Family (CaF), which has a famous directory with information on many conditions and support groups.

● *CaF*, tel: 0808 808 3555, www.cafamily.org.uk. Parents wishing to set up a support group can contact Liz Ranger at CaF for guidance and advice, tel: 020 7608 8715

● *Max Appeal*, tel: 0800 389 1049

Bottle is broken

For over ten years I have had an artificial sphincter, which means I no longer have to wear a urine bag. I can't always get into toilets, so I use a latex bag that folds up into a tiny cylinder. Unfortunately, it has broken, so I now have to carry a large bag on the back of my chair with a normal plastic urine bottle. Do you know how I can get another latex bag?

Shaun, Rotherham

I suggest you contact the Continence Foundation, which will have details of suitable bags. They publish material for professionals and individuals, including information on continence services, clinics and specialists, products and educational resources.

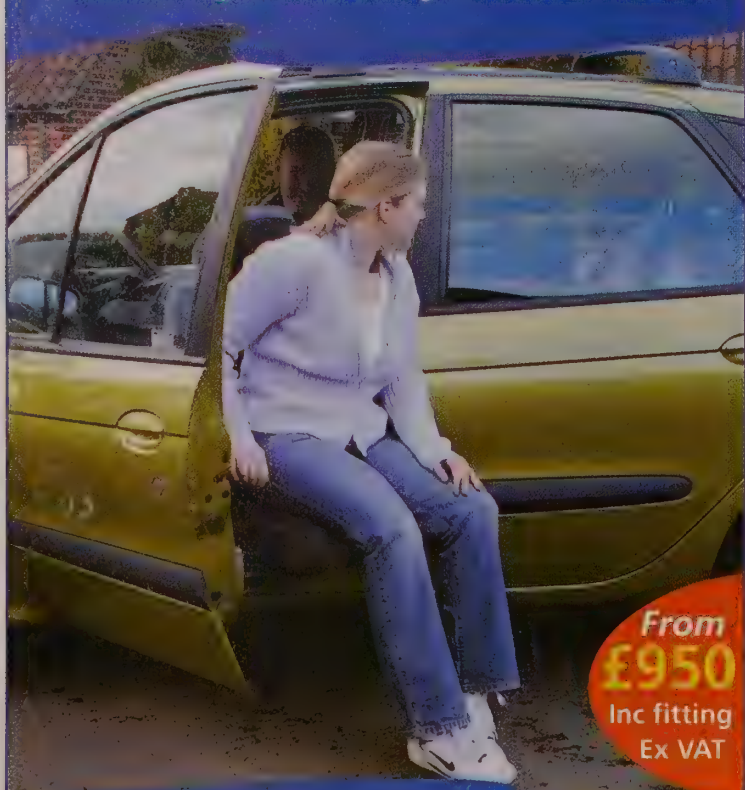
● *Continence Foundation helpline*, tel: 0845 345 0165, open 9.30am-1pm weekdays

Help at the end of the phone



DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psychotherapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.

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B r i g h t i d e a s

From slippers to talking tins, Lucy Howard finds there are plenty of gadgets to help you through the winter months



Take the worry out of leading an active life with the LIQSORB personal disposable urinal bag from PWP (Personal Waste Products). This is designed to enable wheelchair users to go about their daily lives without having to worry about finding a public toilet as soon as their urostomy bags are full. Chris Bantin, former paralympian (*My Job*, p34, and see pic left), says: "I have a very active life and I am always on the go, but for years I have had difficulties finding public toilets with wheelchair access. I realised that this was the answer to my problem." From £9.72 for a pack of three. Tel: 0800 358 9871. www.pwpdirect.com

Bathroom manufacturer Keuco has launched a new range of bathroom accessories and fittings ideal for disabled people. The Plan Collection is practical and safe, as well as stylish and innovative, with coordinating items available. Products in the range include a shower rail system with a removable seat and an adjustable rail. Available in chrome, stainless steel and aluminium. Prices start at £142. For stockists, tel: 01442 865220. www.keuco.de



Anne Davies suggests you fend off the cold weather with a fun range of slippers from Totes. The latest addition is the Sporty Suedette Ballerina style (right) £17. For children, there's the Chenille bunny and matching Slippersox set. Available in pink or blue £12. Tel: 01277 630277, www.totes.com Also available from larger department stores.



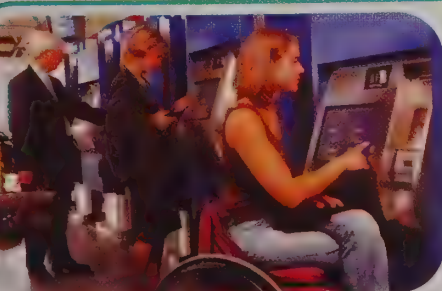
Take the guesswork out of identifying what's in the tins in the cupboard and deciding what to have for dinner with talking tins from the RNIB. The yellow lids with black contrasting buttons fit on standard size tins and are secured with built-in magnets. There are two record buttons for you to record what's in the tin, and a large tactile play button. Talking Tin Starter Pack, £9.99. Tel: 0845 702 3153, or buy online at <http://onlineshop.rnib.org.uk>



Roll-a-Ramp have produced a new range of accessories to make their portable and lightweight ramps more adaptable. These include special mountings, adjustable supports and brackets that allow ramps to be attached to specific surfaces. The universal Seg Mount Bracket, £29.74 per pair, has thumbscrews that hold the ramp in place, giving safety and security. The handrail kit (below), which can be fitted on either side of a ramp, is a lightweight aluminium banister with a plastic handgrip. It can be easily attached and detached from the ramp whenever needed. Available in different lengths, from £441.42. Tel: 020 8341 6767. www.rollaramp.co.uk



Sometimes finding exactly what you need in the shops can be difficult. Instead of searching for the perfect product, it can be easy to adapt existing equipment with a bit of imagination. Anne Davies told me about a range of plant trolleys from plant-trolley.co.uk They come with castors that make them ideal moveable stands for things like spin dryers and dustbins, which are often stored in awkward places under work surfaces. Placed on a trolley, they can be accessed and used easily. Various prices, including a set of four for £22.04. Tel: 01424 819381. www.plant-trolley.com



If you find public transport a hassle, you will be pleased to know that Hothouse Product Development Partners have teamed up with Ascom Transport Revenue to provide railway stations with new customer friendly ticketing machines (left). Designed for wheelchair users, they are installed at a lower level than conventional machines. They combine the latest technological advances with accessibility, enabling users to make transactions quickly and easily. The machines are on trial at several stations including Gatwick airport, Marylebone, King's Cross and Wokingham. For more information contact Hothouse on 020 8687 2093.

Correction

In Checkout, page 24, in our November issue, we said that the Kimba pushchair from Otto Bock costs £8,909 plus £600. The actual price is £899 for the base unit and £600 for the seating. We apologise for any confusion caused.

E a s y k i t

Lucy Andrews answers your questions



I've been having trouble getting in and out of the bath recently and am aware that this is not likely to get any easier as I get older. I have seen adverts for special baths, and wondered whether to go for one of them.

Look at the simpler solutions first. Grab rails, a bath board and seat are all low cost devices that can work very effectively, and a strap called a leg lifter can help lift your legs over into the bath. (Try Homecraft Ability One, tel: (01623) 757555 or Nottingham Rehab Supplies, tel: (0845) 606 0911).

I would also suggest you look at bath lifts as these help with raising and lowering in the bath and most need no extra installation. A battery powered bath lifts cost around £500.

If you ultimately decide to replace your bath, decide what you find difficult. Lifting and lowering? Managing the taps? Lifting your legs over into the bath? Look at the different styles available. Some have a door; some have a seat lift; some have both. Which would

be best for you?

If you choose a bath with a door, the controls can be fiddly. Some have a step and limited leg room. Remember the bath can only be filled and emptied with you in it.

If you choose a style with a seat lift it will not help if you can't swing your legs over into the bath. Some seats swing out over the bath rim or can incorporate a leg support, so check that there is enough room outside your bath.

Remember to think about other household members too, whether your bath will meet your future needs, and how long you are planning to stay in your home. A non-conventional bath can make selling your home more difficult. And some people have found that the hot water runs out if their new style bath takes more water!

For more information, check the The Disabled Living Foundation's fact sheet, *Choosing a bath and bath accessories* on our web site www.dlf.org.uk or phone the helpline on 0895 130 9177. A local Disabled Living Centre can also offer help, see www.dlcc.org.uk for addresses. Above is the Windsor bath from Gainsborough Bathrooms, tel: 01527 594203 or www.gainsboroughsbathrooms.com/windsor.php

Lucy Andrews is a senior advisor at the DLF.



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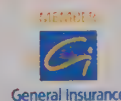
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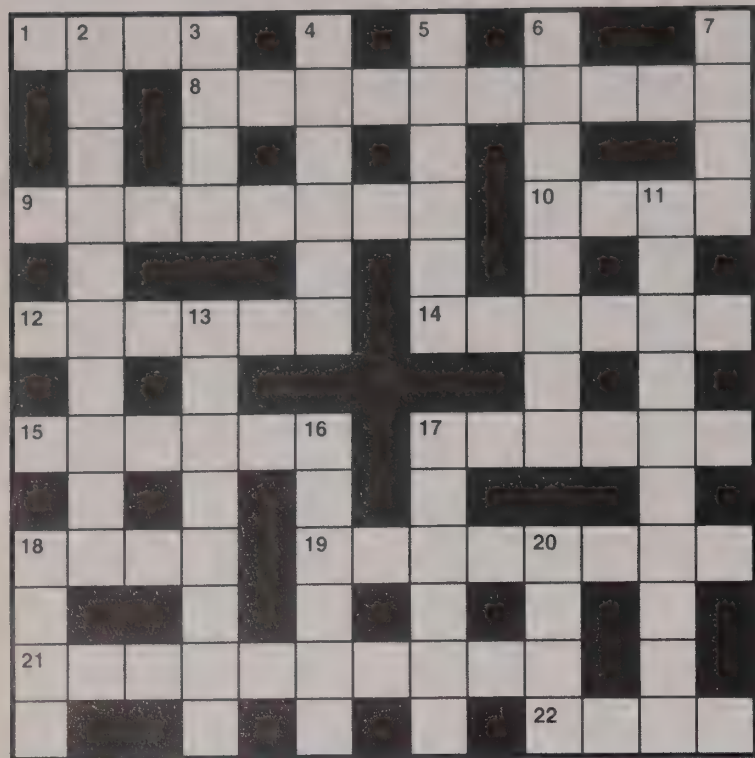
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ACROSS

- 1. Ant, whose hits included *Goody Two Shoes* and *Apollo 9* (4)
- 8. Person who attacks established ideas (10)
- 9. Should drugs based on this be prescribed on the NHS? (8)
- 10. Resort on the French Riviera (4)
- 12. See 2 Down
- 14. Units of measurement of heat (6)
- 15. Head-dresses worn by bishops (6)
- 17. *The _____*, special effects movie starring Keanu Reeves (6)
- 18. Novice or beginner (4)
- 19. In the final moment (4,4)
- 21. South American rodent bred for its soft grey fur (10)
- 22. Mound of sand (4)

DOWN

- 2. And 12 Across, 11 Down. The govern-ment is planning to scrap it (10,6,10)
- 3. A person's bearing or appearance (4)
- 4. Unresolved difficulties (6)
- 5. Women's close-fitting undergarment (6)
- 6. Home Secretary who recently launched a £5 million Inclusive Fitness Initiative (8)
- 7. Eye inflammation (4)
- 11. See 2 Down
- 13. Weapons used by whalers (8)
- 16. Slender, graceful women (6)
- 17. Tissue in the body which produces movement by contracting (6)
- 18. This friar was a friend of Robin Hood (4)
- 20. London's only pan-disability organisation which recently celebrated its 50th birthday (4)

CROSSWORD BY JIM MCLAREN
ANSWERS ON PAGE 44

Candid Kate



It's 2004. The European Year of Disabled People is over – or is it?

Firstly, I would like to say Happy New Year to everyone who reads this; so Happy New Year, Mum.

I hope Father Christmas brought you what you wanted. Yeah, right, he couldn't bring you full equal human rights, all the support and the services that you need – the guy isn't a miracle worker. He only rides reindeer all around the world in a very short time span.

As usual, you disabled people are asking for far too much.

Stop talking about Christmas; it is over, Katie! (It is not, as I write this, but that would be revealing the secrets of journalism which would be like telling you that Father Christmas doesn't exist, and you need to believe in him and his sleigh because you can't believe in Bert Massie and his Commission any more).

So 2004: it is no longer European Year of Disabled People, unless you are a small north London borough who thinks it is. One of our councillors proclaimed in the local press that 2004 is Year of the Disabled. Perhaps that's why they did nothing in 2003. But don't worry, we may enjoy their attempts, like the young boy who they recently forced into a special school (no, "inclusive" special unit to tell the rose-tinted truth) against his wishes. And we got a lot out of the fortnight they call inclusion "week".

Our council is doing such excellent work for disabled people that I didn't agree to have my photo taken with one of the authority's MPs at an event recently. No matter. The great photo was taken, and my friend was pushed away by the excited photographer, who just hit the propaganda gold mine for his and the MP's careers.

Whilst my request to the MP was given very little importance and my voice and my rights were given less, the photo made the MP look really good talking to a disabled person.

I hate it when that happens – like pictures of Tony Blair kissing babies on the head. I hope the next kid to suffer that will puke all over the prime minister.

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What's on

Inclusive Technology will be hosting the Special Needs Fringe 2004 from 7-9 January at the Hilton Olympia Hotel, London. The event will offer ideas, information and opportunities for volunteers. There will also be seminar sessions covering the latest developments in technology in various fields. Tel: 01457 819790. www.inclusive.co.uk/exhibitions

The National Autistic Society (NAS) is holding a seminar titled First Time with Autistic Spectrum Disorders on 13 January. The event will cover the range of autistic spectrum disorders and their impact on teaching, learning and behaviour. Queen Hotel, Chester. Limited places available, from £99. Booking forms are available from NAS on 0115 911 3367, or email: conference@nas.org.uk

The Prevention of Professional Abuse Network (POPAN) has relaunched its support, advocacy and information services. They are now incorporating services for professionals, friends, family and other patients or clients, enabling

patients and relatives to contact them if they are concerned about possible abuse by a health care professional. POPAN offers help, support, advice and information, and liaises with professional and regulatory organisations. POPAN, 2 Wyvil Court, Wyvil Road, London, SW8 2TG. Opening times: Monday: 1.30-4pm, 4.30 to 7pm, Tuesday and Thursday, 10 to 12.30pm. 1.30 to 4pm. Helpline: 0845 4 500 300.

CLWB SBECTRW is a new social group for children with autism, based in Bangor. Jointly run by the volunteering network of the National Autistic Society (NAS) Wales and Bangor University, the group will aim to develop children's social skills as well as help parents. The group meets monthly after school hours at Bangor University. Call Margaret Jones on 01792 815915, or email mjones@nas.org.uk. If you are interested in volunteering for NAS, call Kate Wynds on 01792 815915, or email: kwynds@nas.org.uk

Website

Remploy, which provides employment opportunities for disabled people, has launched a new website with improved accessibility. Remploy joined forces with web communication agency CTPi to create a website that caters for the needs of all users, including those with visual impairments. Particular consideration was given to the design and layout to ensure compatibility with technological aids and software such as screen readers, and the site follows the RNIB's guidelines. The new site is aimed at disabled jobseekers, charities, government agencies and prospective employers. See www.rempoy.co.uk

Whizz-Kidz, the children's mobility charity, in conjunction with Reed Business Information (RBI), has launched its new website to provide a user-friendly mobility information service for parents of disabled children. The site gives information on the range of specialised mobility equipment

that Whizz-kidz offers, as well as help and advice. See www.whizz-kidz.org.uk

Resource, the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, has created an information database to help public buildings find support and advice on a range of disability issues. The site gives information on specialist staff, and allows users to browse categorised listings to find the best match for their needs. See www.resource.gov.uk

Digerati, the digital media specialist, has created a website to promote the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) qualification. The ECDL is a recognised standard in computing skills in over 125 countries. The website is aimed at people looking to enhance their job prospects, and follows strict accessibility guidelines. The site is ideal for people with visual impairments, with a simple, bright design, and a

range of features from text size changes to full text-to-speech conversion. All photographs and images are also described in text format. Log on to www.ecdl.co.uk

The Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) has relaunched its website. It also has a new internet publication, Access Solutions, aimed at businesses, shops and other public facilities which want guidance and information on how to comply with Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) from next October. For a £40 subscription, Access Solutions will provide a lay person's guide to the law, "case studies", over 3,000 products from access equipment to communications, which can help disabled employees, and over 700 suppliers. DLF Training is offering a course on the DDA in conjunction with the publication. See www.dlf.org.uk or email sales@accessolutions.org.uk for more information.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS:

1. Adam 8. Iconoclast 9. Cannabis 10. Nice 12. Rights
14. Therms 15. Mitres 17. Matrix 18. Tyro 19. Last
Gasp 19. Chinchilla 22. Dune

DOWN:

2. Disability 3. Mien 4. Doubts 5. Corset 6. Blunkett
7. Styx 11. Commission 13. Harpoons 16. Sylphs
17. Muscle 18. Tusk 20. GLAD

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Former Paralympian Chris Bantin says:

"I truly wonder why somebody hasn't thought of this product before."

I have a very active life and I am always on the go, but for years I've had problems finding public toilets with wheelchair access when I am out and about.

I have a stoma and use a urostomy bag which needs emptying on a fairly regular basis and I've lost count of the number of times I've had to pull up at a kerb and just empty it into the gutter, which is very undignified to say the least.

This new Disposable Urinal Bag allows me to simply empty the urostomy bag into the urinal in the privacy of my car. I wouldn't be without it now, what's the point of struggling and rushing to get to the loo?"

Thanks to Chris Bantin
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Courses

Greater London Action on Disability (GLAD) is holding a training course titled 'Disability Equality & Rights' on 26-27 January in London. Aimed at raising awareness of disability issues and human rights, the course will look at ways we can bring about change and show organisations and workplaces how they can develop good practice. Conference Centre, 336 Brixton Road. From £100, including refreshments, lunch and an information pack. Book by 21 January. Tel: 020 7346 5800. Email: j.nixon@glad.org.uk

SHARE Community provides training and education for disabled people and those with long-term health problems, allowing them to update basic skills in numeracy and literacy, and gain new qualifications in a variety of subjects. Share helps people get a work placement or a job, and there are also extra activities such as yoga, creative writing and British Sign Language. To find out more, contact Share, 64 Altenburg Gardens, London, SW11 1JL, or email: Share.Community@talk21.com

Publications

Skill (the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities) has published *Into Work Experience*, a guide for disabled people. It aims to show practical ways in which they can get the best from their work experience opportunities and build on them for future employment success. The guide includes practical advice, information on legal rights, a reference section and first-hand accounts. Free. Skill has also published *Into Higher Education 2004*, an information guide for disabled students considering applying to college or university. £12.50, £2.50 to disabled students. Tel: 0207 450 0648, email: sue@skill.org.uk

There are also two booklets on volunteering from Skill, titled *Disability Equality in Volunteering* (for organisations) and *Into Volunteering* (for potential volunteers). Skill is currently consulting with

organisations in London that have or have had disabled volunteers, as part of an 18-month research project, and is looking for organisations and volunteers willing to take part. Tel: 0207 450 0646, or email: Rhoda@skill.org.uk

Mencap has launched a multi-media pack called *Listen Up*, a resource for children with learning difficulties, to help disabled children complain about the services they use. For children, parents and professionals, the pack aims to educate staff in places such as hospitals and play schemes to recognise non-verbal signs that a child isn't happy, and in this way, to erode the barriers that many children face when trying to get staff to listen to them and act on their concerns. The pack includes posters, complaints cards, games, workbooks, leaflets and a training video for staff. Free from the Learning Disability

Helpline on 0808 808 1111, or order online at www.mencap.org.uk/listenup

The **RNID** has published *Understanding Tinnitus – Managing the Noises in Your Ears or in Your Head*, by Keith Dunmore, Valerie Tait and Glynis Riddiford. It is estimated that more than 10% of people in the UK have tinnitus in some form. Aimed at patients and professionals, the book aims to help people with the condition to understand and manage it. It offers advice and guidance, and covers practical issues such as equipment and medicine, as well as information about support networks. £5.99, available from some bookstores or from Forest Books: tel/ text: 01594 833858, email: forest@forestbooks.com or www.rnidshop.com

The **RNIB** has published a new *Learning Catalogue*, an educational guide to products,

services and publications for vision-impaired learners of all ages. Products covered include educational software and hardware. To view the catalogue or order a copy in various formats, see: <http://onlineshop.rnib.org.uk/learning>

The **Parkinson's Disease Society** (PDS) has launched an exercise video called *Keeping Moving*, a 45-minute programme of gentle exercises demonstrated by people with Parkinson's. The programme, devised by a registered physiotherapist, is designed to work primarily on posture and balance, and aims to raise awareness of the positive benefits of exercise on managing disabilities and increasing health and well-being. Copies of the video, with an accompanying booklet and information sheet, are £19. Tel: 01473 212115 or email: services@sharward.co.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

DN is available on tape, disk and by e-mail. Contact Talking Newspapers, see imprint, page 2.

ATTENTION

DN cannot guarantee inclusion in a particular issue. Due to deadlines, please send details at the earliest opportunity.

disabilitynow 2004

Advertisers please note the following issues for 2004

March – *Celebrating DN at 20 years old. A special birthday issue*

April – *Access Supplement*

Prompted by the significant changes in legislation in 2004 covering access for disabled people, *Disability Now* in association with *Interbuild*, the uk's largest building and construction event for the trade, held in Birmingham, 25-29 April 2004, will produce a supplement on all aspects of access. This will be given away at the show in the dedicated area for manufacturers of specialist products and equipment. It will also be inserted in both *DN* and the *Access Journal*, giving it a print run of almost 30,000 copies. The supplement will give the construction industry the most comprehensive guide to access they will need.

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If you are interested in taking a stand at *Interbuild*, contact Paula Watson on **020 7886 3139**. For visitor details and for free tickets, visit www.interbuild.com or call **0870 429 4558**.

June – *Motoring Supplement – Mobility Roadshow issue*

September – *Education Supplement*

November – *Employment Supplement*

To book space in these issues call Richard Gresham on **020 7619 7336**; fax: 020 7619 7331; email: richard.gresham@scope.org.uk



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CHAIRMAN RENAULT KANGOO 1.2RN, blue, W reg, 12k miles. Seats 3 plus wheelchair, electric winch. Vgc. £8,600. Tel: 01727 843472.

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AUTOCHAIR 100KG FOLD down electric in-car minihoist for lifting powered wheelchairs/scooters in and out of vehicles. 3 years old. Little used. Cost £795. Offers. Solihull Area. Tel before 10 am: 0121 745 2121. Email: rob.lan@btopenworld.com

LANDEEZE ALL-TERRAIN wheelchair, suitable for beach, shallow water, includes street wheels. Vgc, new £2,700 with full info, only £1,250. Tel: 01763 269638 (Cams).

SHOPRIDER SPRINTER 4-WHEEL scooter, variable speed up to 8 mph, suitable for pavement or road use, 2 baskets, hazard, front and rear lights. Battery charger, 20 mile range on full charge, hardly used. £950. Tel: 01763 260027 (South Cambs) or mobile: 07776 213161.

WISPA MODEL S235 Invamed blue scooter, charger. As new, max. speed 4 mph, with charger max. range 15-20 miles. Fully adjustable, folds easily without tools. Was £1300, now £650. ono. Tel after 6 pm: 020 8239 0372.

KARMA FALCON KP25 power wheelchair, max speed 4 mph. With charger, max range 16 miles, kerb climber, max user weight 18 stone. Bought May 2001 for £2,400. In excellent condition, serviced last year. Together with all relevant paperwork, £990. Tel: 020 7708 2550.

SHOPRIDER SOVEREIGN 4-WHEEL scooter with extras. Excellent condition, £975 ono. Tel: 01923 674009.

STERLING DIPLOMAT 408ID (2001). Hardly used, excellent condition. Blue, 4 wheels, full suspension. 8mph special fan cooled motor. Baskets F/R. High back seat, headrest, sliding seat base. Dealer serviced. Cost new £3750. Delivery possible. £1195 ono. Tel: 01223 741898 (Cambridge) or mobile after 12 pm: 07710 353 251.

SHOPRIDER SOVEREIGN SCOOTER, with charger, max range 20 miles. A couple of months' old. Cost £1,639, must sell, £900 ono. Tel: 020 8788 3220.

• Household/family

AQUATEC BELUGA SCISSOR-ACTION bath lift with charger. £100. Tel: 01763 260027 (South Cambs) or mobile: 07776 213161.

• Help

THE ONCE ORANGE BADGE POETRY SUPPLEMENT Free flyer-style poetry supplement for everyone whose life has been touched by

disability. No preference to style or length. All work is read, acknowledged and returned. Writers wanted for issues 2 & 3. PO Box 184, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 5WT. Telephone: 01708 852827.

• Bicycles/Tricycles

PASHLEY PICADOR TRIKE, immaculate condition, three speed, extra backrest and footstraps. Only £350. Tel: 01763 269638 (Cams).

HOW TO REPLY

To reply to a personal ad indicate the Box Number and mark the envelope Private and Confidential. If you do not it will be opened. Send it to DN, address on page 2.

PERSONAL ADS

For personal ads, submit about 25 words and send a cheque or postal order for £20 payable to Disability Now with your ad. This is to help cover our costs.

SEND US YOUR SMALLS...

...and make a big impression. Small ads in DN reach over 70,000 people for just £7 a line. All small ads must be paid for in advance. If you want to advertise, please use the form provided. Send it with a cheque for the total to Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

CONDITIONS

Disability Now maintains the right to amend or withdraw lineage adverts without prior notice. All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested.

Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Patrick Durham-Matthews (tel: 020 7619 7320), fax: 020 7619 7331.

Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Richard Gresham (see contact details above).

DN cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

Classified lineage advertisements

Please use this form if you are a private individual and want to place a classified advertisement (not Personal adverts). Write clearly in block capitals. Remember to allow a space between words. Use each space in the line even if you have to split words at the end.

Lineage styles

EXAMPLE OF standard lineage advert. Cost: £7 per line. Tick box below.

EXAMPLE OF semi-display lineage advert. Cost: £7 per line plus £10. Tick box below.

EXAMPLE OF box lineage advert. Cost: £7 per line plus £20. Tick box below.

- ☐ Standard lineage advert
☐ Semi-display lineage advert
☐ Box lineage advert

Choose an advert style from far right. Send this coupon with your name, address, daytime telephone number and a cheque for the total made payable to Disability Now to: 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

DN reserves the right to edit advertisements if necessary. Completion of this form does not guarantee inclusion in a particular issue. Sorry no refunds. DN is a non-profit making newspaper.

• Recruitment (on pages 48 to 50)

**Hammersmith And Fulham Action on Disability**

Email: info@hafad.org.uk. Charity No: 1091518. Company No: 4237604

Director

36 hours • c £34,000

HAFAD is one of London's leading disability organisations and has been at the cutting edge of the disability movement since 1979.

This post will provide a major opportunity to the appropriately qualified disabled person, to advance your management career. You will need strategic vision and a commitment to equality and rights, a proven track record as a motivated leader with the ability to positively influence policy and practice as well as manage a diverse staff team. HAFAD can offer you a competitive salary, contributory pension scheme as well as a real chance to advance equality for disabled people living and working in Hammersmith & Fulham.

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications to be received by Wednesday 21st January 2004
Interviews to be held in the week beginning 2nd February 2004

HAFAD encourages applications from disabled people and people from minority ethnic communities who are currently under represented in our staff team.

For further details and an application pack (please state format) e-mail info@hafad.org.uk or ring Rosario on 020 7471 8510 or write to HAFAD, the Greswell Centre, Greswell Street, London SW6 6PX.

**Director**

disability network hounslow

£28,935 – 30,582 (+5% pension contribution)
35 hours a week based in the London Borough of Hounslow

If you have management experience and can provide direction and development to our organisation then you will be ensuring that positive change is achieved for our local disabled community.

You will be responsible for managing the organisation, its five staff, its finance, its funding, its legal duties and its work in the disability field.

For an informal chat about the post or an application pack please contact the Manager, Emma Garner, on tel 020 8758 2048, fax 020 8758 2014, minicom 020 8758 2065 or email mail@disabilitynetworkhounslow.org, or write to us at Inclusive Living Centre, 121 High Street, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 8AT

Disabled People are particularly encouraged to apply for this post.

Closing date: 13th February 2004. Interviews w/c 23rd February 2004.

Company Limited by Guarantee 4542527 Registered Charity 1097010

• Grants

Grants for the arts

Our grants are for individuals, arts organisations, national touring, and other people who use the arts as part of their work.

We want to increase opportunities for cultural diversity in the arts – this includes support for deaf and disabled artists.

Visit www.artscouncil.org.uk for more information or to download an application pack. Or you can phone 0845 300 6200, fax 020 7973 6590, textphone 020 7973 6564, or send an email to enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk



Greater London Action on Disability (GLAD) is a dynamic pan London organisation of disabled people. We are looking for a new person to join our team. You will form part of a dedicated team helping **GLAD** to deliver a wide range of services to disabled people in London. All candidates must display a clear commitment to equal opportunities.

Chief Executive Officer

Salary £40,326 per annum including London Weighting Allowance

GLAD is looking for an exceptional dynamic disabled person to lead, promote and consolidate on the work achieved, and take us confidently and creatively forward as we grow.

You will have excellent communication, partnership building and strategic planning skills, a proven track record in raising significant amounts of funding, experience of developing membership, substantial experience in senior management, with the ability to inspire and lead a diverse staff team, a thorough understanding of the social model of disability and its practice and a thorough knowledge and practice of disability and equality issues.

Applications are restricted to disabled people. **GLAD's** offices are fully accessible. A job pack for this post is available in print, large print, (please enclose a SAE for 70 pence) audio tape, on disk or by email (mark your envelope Private and confidential) to Janet Nixon Director of Operations at **GLAD** 336 Brixton Road. London SW9 7AA. Tel: 020 7346 5800, Fax 020 7346 8844, minicom 020 7326 4554 or email j.nixon@glad.org.uk

Closing date 30 January 2004 Interviews Week Beginning 16 February 2004

Charity Number 293158 Company No 1959981

• For sale

Powerchairs Mobility Consultants
New and Nearly New, Electric Wheelchairs,
3 and 4 Wheel Scooters.
All models wanted and for sale.
Ring Free anytime
0800 074 6834
All major credit cards accepted

PEDAL TRIKES

£175-£370
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www.missioncycles.co.uk
info@missioncycles.co.uk

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MAYDAY PRODUCTS
Help protect your wheelchair on
board planes, boats, trains and cars.
WHEELCHAIR TRAVEL BAG © 2003.
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email: maydayuk@oxfree.com
Tel: 01491 680103.

DISCLAIMER - DN is not responsible for claims made in the adverts it prints. Readers are advised to check claims with advertisers before relying on them.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES FOR SALE

2002 02 Mercedes Vito, 112 CDI, Auto, 1 owner, tail lift, 10,000 miles	£16,750
2002 Y Toyota Hiace Versa, Diesel, 10,000 miles, 1 owner	£11,250
2000 W Renault Espace Hill Grau, 9,000 miles, A/C	£18,995
2000 W VW LWB, Side lift, 32,000 miles	£12,750
2000 V Sharan Automotive TDi, 2 owners, 11,000 miles, A/C	£13,995
1999 V Peugeot Expert TD Hill Grau, 5+ chair A/C	£12,500
1999 V Escort Chairman diesel, 44,000 miles, PAS, 1 owner	£8,750
1999 T Mercedes Vito, 180CDi, Traveliner, side lift	£11,495
1999 T Suzuki Wagon R, Auto, 1 owner, 30,000 miles	£7,495
1998 S Sharan Brotherhood TDi, raised roof, 1 owner, 62,000 miles, A/C	£14,995
1998 S VW TD, with Tail lift, 42,000 miles	£8,750
1998 R Ford Courier Auto, P.A.S. Universal, 2 owners, 11,000 miles	£6,495
1998 R Mercedes Sprinters, with tail lifts, low mileage diesels	from £12,995
1997 R Toyota Hiace Petrol, 1 owner, 53,000 miles, lift	£8,250
1997 P Fiat Fiorino 1.4 Chairman, 16,000 miles	£4,495
1996 P VW Caravelle Chairman, Auto, 73,000 miles	£9,500
1996 N Nissan Serene Chairman 1.6, 8,000 miles	£7,750
1989 G Brotherhood Prairie SLX, Auto, 80,000 miles	£5,250

Kangoo & Berlingo models Choice of 11
Traffic & Vanette Cargo models Choice of 10

A selection of 60 WAVs from £2,750 fully serviced with warranty. Demo and delivery anywhere in UK mainland free. Part exchange and vehicles sought for purchase.

CLARKE MOBILITY
SNODLAND, KENT
01634 243596
www.gfclarke.com

Accessible Vehicle Register

We specialise in locating used vehicles to suit the specific needs of our customers. If you are looking for an accessible vehicle or have one to dispose of, contact Adam Price. We also supply and install all forms of access equipment.

01202 814112

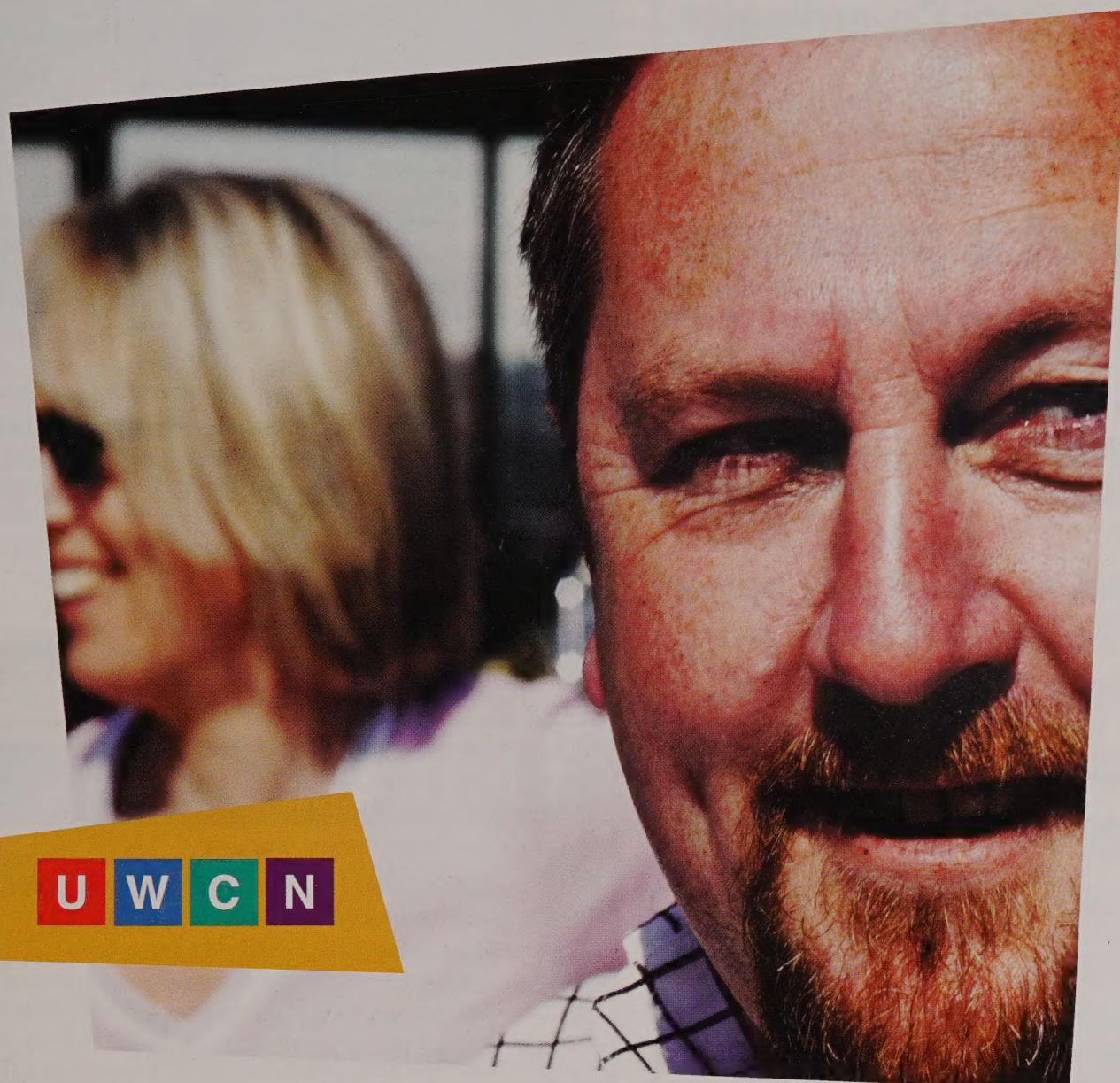
adamprice.avr@tiscali.co.uk

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We Design And Build Any Cot or Bed You Need.

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Not only is the University of Wales College, Newport a great place to study, it's also a fantastic place to work. As well as a vibrant, down-to-earth atmosphere, our Newport and Caerleon campuses are home to a vast range of opportunities, in everything from administration to catering, cleaning and security through to management and academia. So, whatever your background, skills or experience, there's a job just for you.

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COLEG PRIFYSGOL CYMRU, CASNEWYDD

DEADLINES

DN Extra

February 2004

published 7

February. Classified

deadlines: Booking

& Copy: 28

January.

Disability Now

February 2004

published 24

January classified

deadlines: Booking:

9 January. Copy: 13

January.



**Gloucestershire
Constabulary**
*Striving for a safer
Gloucestershire*

Gloucestershire Constabulary is committed to Equal Opportunities. We particularly welcome applications from members of minority ethnic groups and people who consider themselves to be disabled who are currently under-represented in our work force. All applications will be treated on merit. The Constabulary operates a rigorous vetting policy and applicants must be aware that personal vetting will be applied as part of the recruitment process. The Constabulary operates a no smoking policy.

The Constabulary will be relocating its Headquarters site to Waterwells, Gloucester in Spring/Summer 2005. Support Staff commencing employment in an HQ post with effect from June 2003 will not be eligible to receive excess mileage payments or any costs associated with the relocation. Successful applicants will be required to move to the new location.



www.gloucestershire.police.uk

A NEW OPPORTUNITY

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MANAGER

Salary Scale: PO 44 - 46 - £32,913 to £34,473 p.a. - Full time 37 hours per week
Applicants seeking part time or flexible working hours are welcome to apply

This new high-profile role will provide strategic support for the Chief Constable's vision for a modern, progressive Constabulary. You will play an important part in implementing new diversity and equality initiatives in accordance with Vision 5 and relevant legislation.

Under the direction of the Assistant Chief Constable of Corporate Services but working with the Superintendent of the Community Partnership Department, you will:

- Manage the Constabulary Trust Project Portfolio
- Manage the Constabulary Race Equality Scheme
- Manage the new Constabulary Diversity Unit
- Chair the Constabulary Equal Opportunities Advisory Group

You will have a managerial qualification of DMS (or equivalent) and have a proven track record of at least three years experience in dealing with equal opportunity matters, diversity issues and employment legislation at a managerial and supervisory level. In addition, you will have experience of liaising, internally and externally, with minority groups and organisations, e.g. the Commission for Racial Equality. Educated to degree level, membership of the CIPD and evidence of continuous professional and personal development are all desirable.

We seek applications from enthusiastic individuals who have the ability to quickly establish credibility within a constantly changing environment. The Constabulary can offer assistance with relocation expenses up to a maximum of £8000 (inclusive of VAT)

Interviews will be held on 5 and 6 February 2004 (please note that these dates are not negotiable)

For a job description and application form, please write, quoting reference 679A to:
The Recruitment Department, PO Box 427, Police HQ, Lansdown Road,
Cheltenham, Glos, GL51 6YX or e-mail begum.mitha@gloucestershire.police.uk.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2004

VOICE UK: qualified Training and Development Manager, £25,473-£27,003 knowledge of working with people with learning disabilities and the criminal justice system. Home or office (Derby) based. Closing date: 30 January 2004, interviews 10 February 2004.

Contact 01332 869310 or voiceuk@clara.co.uk

• **Recruitment (on pages 48 to 50)****Norfolk County Disability Sports Co-ordinator**

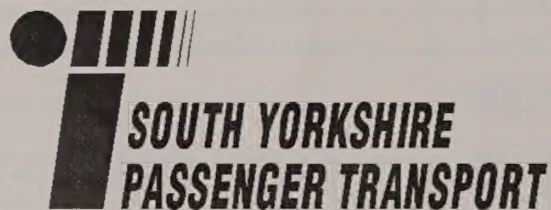
Do you believe "Sport is a right not a privilege for disabled people"?

If the answer is YES - then you could be the person we are looking for to drive forward this exciting project in Norfolk.

We are seeking to appoint a County Disability Sport Co-ordinator in the New Year to expand sport and physical activity opportunities for disabled people in Norfolk.

This full time post is funded through the Active Communities Development Fund (ACDF) and key partners in the county including the 8 Local Authorities and voluntary sports organisations.

If you would like more information and be sent an application form (application forms available from mid-January 04) then please contact Liz Delayney, County Sports Development Officer on 01603 727 884.



E X E C U T I V E

The Transport Executive is responsible for securing and promoting the best possible transport network for the people of South Yorkshire.

We believe we can only achieve our vision if we make full use of the talents and resources of all our employees. The Transport Executive is fully committed to providing an environment which eliminates unfair discrimination and which actively promotes productive working relationships based on the unique contributions of different individuals within our organisation.

*For details of our current vacancies
please call our recruitment line on 0114 221 1223*



Will you be my Valentine?

For £10 your Valentine message will feature in Disability Now February 2004.

Maximum 20 words. Send a cheque / postal order payable to Disability Now by 13

January 2004. Address it to Patrick, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

• **Performance**

Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company present

I do...

in association with **About Face Theatre Company** and **Mosaic Arts**

Directed by Lisi Perry

Designed by Mark Walters

I do... steps sideways into a world of weddings, from hen parties to the marriage vows, in a flurry of organza and tulle. Five different people move through a myriad of ideas and emotions about marriage - they know where they want to get to but just how do they get there?

Tour dates

- 14th Jan Langley School, Solihull
- 16th Jan Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch
- 21st Jan Coneygre Arts Centre, Sandwell
- 23rd Jan The Brewhouse, Burton on Trent
- 24th Jan The Courtyard, Hereford
- 28th Jan Shrewsbury Music Hall, Shropshire
- 30th Jan The Dream Factory, Warwick
- 3rd Feb Woolfenden Hall, Warwickshire College, Rugby
- 4th Feb Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire
- 12th Feb Forest Community Centre, Walsall
- 13th Feb Pencombe Village Hall, Herefordshire
- 14th Feb John Masefield School, Ledbury
- 25th Feb Sutton High School, Ellesmere Port
- 28th Feb Mac, Birmingham

Flying School

A 5-day residency Sunday, 28th March – Thursday, 1st April 2004 at Morton Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire.

A stunning combination of aerial work, dance and music under the guidance of Jess Curtis founder of Gravity Physical Entertainment USA and musician Jon Petter

Fees: Waged £300 / unwaged £150, bursaries available subject to funding.

**Blue Eyed Soul, Pimley Barns, Sundorne Rd,
Shrewsbury SY4 4SA.**

P: 01743 271900 E: admin@blueyedsouldance.com

W: www.blueyedsouldance.com

• **Conference**

Hands Off Our Genes

**Free Disabled People's Conference – A celebration of diversity
24th January 2004 – Newcastle upon Tyne**

For a booking form contact: Disability Action North East,
MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS
Tel (voice): 0191 2304111 Textphone: 0191 2304009
Email: genetics@dane.org.uk

• **Services**

PHYSIOTHERAPY

BIRKDALE PAEDIATRIC & ADULT NEURO CLINIC

Advice and treatment for babies and children.

Conditions treated are movement and learning difficulties, posture and balance, walking and balance, coordination and hand function.

Cerebral palsy, and children with neurological conditions.

Farshideh Bondarenko DIP (PHYSIO) MCSP SRP

website: www.neuro-physio.co.uk Tel: 020 8998 9403.

TAKE A BREAK IN THE LAKES



Burnside Park in Bowness is close to the magnificent Lake Windermere.

DN can offer one lucky reader the chance to win a luxurious week's holiday there for four people, worth over £1,000.



You will stay in an accessible, fully self catering two bedroom, two bathroom premier cottage, with every conceivable comfort and a variety of facilities at your disposal, including an indoor swimming pool, sauna, gym and Jacuzzi. You will also have full use of the Silhouettes Table de Hot restaurant and the Café des Arts lounge bar. Tours throughout Cumbria are available daily (charges will apply).

For your chance to win this fantastic break in the Lakes, tick "Holiday" in the entry form and return it to our Freepost address.*

Although there can only be one winner, Burnside Park is offering all DN readers a special rate on an exclusive three day, two night stay. Your choice of hotel or cottage accommodation, full breakfast and use of all leisure facilities are available from just £69 per person. You will also get a complimentary four course dinner for two on one of the two evenings. All we ask is for 90 minutes of your time to show you around the resort.

To make your reservation or for more information call 08700 468633 or email cottages@burnsidehotel.com

* Prize can be taken from January 2004 until end of June 2004, subject to availability.

BURNSIDE PARK
Holiday Ownership



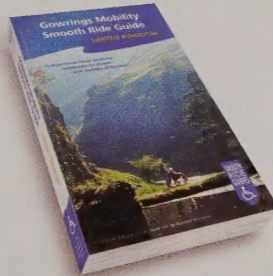
A SMOOTHER RIDE

For any wheelchair traveller, the new updated Gowrings Mobility Smooth Ride Guide is an indispensable companion to a great day out. This thoroughly researched travel book covers every part of the UK, with practical advice about hotels, venues, days out and attractions accessible to wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties. Buildings are graded on their approach, public entrance, interior and facilities such as WC, and a special section is devoted to transport.

For your chance to win one of 15 copies, tick "Book" in the entry form and return it to our freepost address.

If you aren't one of the lucky winners, DN readers buying direct from Gowrings Mobility will receive a discounted rate of £12.50, normally £14.95. To order your copy call Lo-Call 0845 608 8050.

In the European Year of Disabled People, for each book sold, publisher Gowrings Mobility will donate £1 to the charities: MS Society, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and the Stroke Association.



gowrings
mobility

BUDDY WINNER

Mrs Pam Overton and husband Len from Fulham, London, receive November's Up for Grabs prize, a TGA Electric Buddy scooter, from Tim Ross of TGA.

TGA Electric Ltd is pleased to offer DN readers 10 per cent off any product during January.

Call 01787 882244.



Life made easier with... Gowrings Mobility Swivel Seats

Is transferring into the car becoming a bit of a chore? We may have the answer for you. Gowrings Mobility has introduced a new range of swivel seats which make it so much easier. They can be fitted to almost any car and will work on either of the front seats. When installed in a new vehicle, the whole car can be VAT free. Speak to us about how.

Easy to try

If you think that our seats could be beneficial, one of our demonstration team will visit you in your home, without any obligation.

Swivel Seats prices start at £950 (ex VAT).



From the UK's leading manufacturer of wheelchair passenger vehicles Gowrings Mobility has built an unrivalled reputation for great personal service and innovative products. If you would like to find out more about our range of cars and minibuses, call the number below.

Lo-Call **0845 608 8070**

www.gowringsmobility.co.uk

Please complete and return this coupon to: Gowrings Mobility, FREEPOST, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5ZW.

Mr/Mrs/Miss First Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Home Tel.

Send me more information

☐ Swivel seats

☐ Wheelchair passenger vehicles

☐ Contact me to organise a demonstration

Motability accredited supplier

Ask for a demonstration

gowrings
mobility

to enter

Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send FOR FREE to Disability Now, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or e-mail the details to: elizabeth.cowley@scope.org.uk

☐ Holiday

☐ Book



terms & conditions

• closing date for entrants: 23.01.04 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • In association with Burnside Park and Gowrings Mobility. We may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐

DN next month



Premiership ground: Southampton's St Mary's Stadium.

All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 26 January.

EUROPEAN YEAR OF DISABLED PEOPLE

What good did it do?

FOOTBALL ACCESS

Survey of premiership grounds

RELATIONSHIPS

Dating on line: does it work? DN investigates

HOLIDAY TIME (2)

More ideas, including places to stay in the UK, personally recommended, and a trip through China

NEWSAGENT ORDER FORM

(Please complete and take to your newsagent)

Please reserve me a regular copy of *Disability Now* until further notice ☐

Please deliver a copy of *Disability Now* to my home address ☐

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Signature:

To the newsagent: *Disability Now*, ISSN 0958-4676, is published monthly by Scope, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

It is distributed by MMC Ltd, Octagon House, White Hart Meadows, Ripley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6HR.

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The campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

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holiday special – and
win a £1,000 getaway



DW

disabilitynow

20th anniversary

£1.80 January 2004

Lord's award

Ashley's life of
achievement

Mind your language

DW investigates
as Blair blunders

Give us our cannabis

Striking survey results



The Wheelchair Accessible Berlingo

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles



Lewis Reed wish you a very happy New Year. To give your new year the joyous start it deserves we are offering a whopping *£1,000.00 discount on all stock Wheelchair Accessible Citroen Berlingo Multispaces delivered before 31st March 2004. For more information or to book a test drive call 0845 345 0127 or visit www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk

Part Exchange - Free Delivery (mainland UK) - Finance Available - Motability Accredited

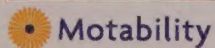
£1,000.00 OFF

The Citroen Berlingo Multispace From *£10,950.00 (rrp £11,950.00)

Most models available for immediate delivery

Call 0845 345 0127 (local rate) or visit www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk

Other models available:
Renault Kangoo, Citroen Dispatch,
Toyota Hiace, Volkswagen T5,
Renault Trafic, Renault Master



*The £1,000.00 discount is available for all Stock Citroen Berlingos delivered before the 31st March 2004. Most models are available for immediate delivery. Please contact us on 0845 345 0127 for full details of the offer. All prices exclusive of VAT and Road Fund Licence. Errors & omissions excepted. Model shown - Citroen Berlingo Multispace may have features available as optional extras.